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M^{RS} ELIZABETH MORTIMER.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH MORTIMER:

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM HER CORRESPONDENCE.

BY AGNES BULMER,

AUTHOR *of* "MESSIAH'S KINGDOM," &c.

> WE gather up, with pious care,
>   What happy saints have left behind;
> Their writings in our memory bear,
>   Their sayings on our faithful mind;
> Their works, which traced them to the skies,
>   As patterns to ourselves we take;
> And dearly love and highly prize
>   The mantle, for the wearer's sake.
>
> C. WESLEY.

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DEDICATION.

To Mrs. Mary Holland, and Mrs. Elizabeth Reynolds; with earnest prayer, that in themselves and their families may be perpetuated that piety and goodness which rendered their beloved, revered, and honoured parent a blessing to her connections, as well as an ornament to society; this memorial is inscribed by their affectionate and faithful friend,

The Author.

London, November, 1835.

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INTRODUCTION.

In physical science general principles can be established only by accumulated facts. In the moral world the same procedure is equally essential and important. Truth refuses not the testimony of experience, but emits a splendour, and exerts an energy, proportioned to the candour, care, and diligence with which its evidences are examined. But if the investigations of science require that accuracy and attention, which nothing but a laudable curiosity, excited by deep interest in its subjects, can induce; how much more imperative is the demand for calm and discriminating observation, in the more difficult analysis of mind! The heart with its affections, the will, the conscience, with the various impulses which operate by turns on each, and, according to their powers and nature, determine not merely the intellectual, but also the moral, constitution; —these require the cautious, prayerful, self-observant vigilance of the discerning Christian, in order to his adequate attainment of that most important branch of knowledge, an acquaintance with himself. Trained by these exercises to habits of attention, he is prepared to reap advantage, not only from his own experience, but from that of others; and thus accumulates a treasure of Divine and human wisdom, to which, amidst the strange vicissitudes of life's eventful journey, he finds innumerable occasions to recur.

To frivolous and thoughtless spirits, who love to flutter on the wing of dissipation, such pursuits may be distasteful: yet can any subject more seasonably, profitably, or delightfully exercise the human faculties, than the moral constitution of man? Acquaintance with the circumstances of a being in its origin so high, by its transgression so degraded, subjected to influences powerful and multifarious from within and from without, must, in the estimation of true wisdom, be regarded as an attainment of the highest order, whether viewed in reference to the present world, or to the world to come.

Creation, in its descending scale, exhibits the perfections of the Deity, as he left them gloriously inscribed on all his works. In the human spirit, the reverse of this is the affecting truth. Man, therefore, must be regarded under those aspects which explain, in reference to his circumstances, what would otherwise appear anomalous amidst the works of the Creator. Although occupying the loftiest pinnacle of terrestrial excellence, yet man *as fallen* is now unhappily the only type under which the species can be contemplated. His tastes and habits indicate the present weakness and perversion of his faculties. Although in search of happiness, he mistakes his aim ; his moral nature is neglected ; his responsibilities are forgotten ; he sustains, in dull vacuity, a tedious and monotonous existence ; or, borne by the uncertain and impetuous gales of passion upon the rocks and quicksands that infest the treacherous sea of life, he is alike deluded, desolate, and wretched,—the sport of circumstances, and the source of misery to others and himself.

But to this his state of helplessness, distress, and degradation, is he hopelessly and irretriev ably condemned ? The glorious Gospel of the Son of God here, in its majesty of mercy, announces an oracular reply. A remedial process has been divinely instituted for the pardon of transgression, for the renovation of man's moral nature, for his reinstatement in the favour and the family of God, and for the recovery of his title to immortal life, and to the felicities of an eternal heaven. But is the remedy efficient ? Does moral health, with its concomitants, peace, purity, and power, evince its efficacy when applied to the disorders of the soul? The Christian, who has yielded up his spirit to the hallowing influences of religion, is here entitled to reply. Facts, in cumulative and indubitable evidence, attest its vital and restoring energy, when faithfully and perseveringly applied; and, as the philosophical experimenter derives new pleasure from every fresh confirmation of the principles he seeks to ascertain; so the believer in the Gospel, with a satisfaction as transcendant as the occasion of it exceeds all other grounds of joy, felicitates himself on the increased assurance of its truth and power, arising from each added instance of its saving and transforming operation on the human soul.

In this view, Christian biography is a treasure of no ordinary value; it applies the proper test to principles; and calls forth experience to vouch for truth. Nor in this age of infidelity is such a voucher to be lightly estimated. Cold and scornful, on the lip of skepticism, hangs the taunt of the reviler: he impugns Christianity, and affronts its majesty, by daring to degrade it to a level with his own cheerless, powerless, heartless unbelief. But from whom receives he license thus boldly to arraign the wisdom, and the goodness, of high Heaven? Not from those who, in humility and faith, have thankfully embraced the boon of mercy; but from men who have assumed its title merely, and adopted its profession from no other motives than those of custom or convenience; beneath its garb but ill concealing worldly-mindedness, indifference, and too often flagrant and revolting vice;—men who have never sought acquaintance with its holy principles, or proved its power to influence the understanding and the heart. Human crime, and indolence, and folly have obstructed, or neglected to promote, the more diffusive application of a system bearing in its whole economy the most sublime and pure impressions of the character of Him in whose perfections it originated; yet, in examples, multiplied beyond the power of human calculation, has been evinced its glorious and complete efficiency to answer every purpose of its institution, and to prove that, were its promulgation and acceptance universal, it would ensure the renovation and salvation of the world.

The relevancy of these observations to the present subject, it will not be difficult to show. They were suggested by reflection on the uniform and consistent beauty of a character, which, without those distinctions that command the admiration of the world, without the fascinations of rank, wealth, or genius, yet so improved the competent endowments of nature, as to acquire considerable mental elevation, to secure extensive influence, and to fill with mild and genial light a sphere of usefulness, benevolence, and duty, for the space of fourscore years. The transition of the mind is rapid from effects to causes. In the present instance there is nothing dubious : one word explains the whole : it was RELIGION, imbibed in healthful freshness from its pure and vital source. It was Christianity, that, in early life, moulded the pliant faculties into its sweet and heavenly form ; that took possession of the mind, and stamped it with the image of true wisdom ; that taught the young affections to expand in earnest aspirations after the highest excellence ; and threw the shadow of its glory round its youthful votary, to shield her from the evil influences of a dangerous and corrupting world.

From such premises the inference is easy and legitimate. A system that thus rectifies, adorns, and raises human nature, must proceed from Heaven ; and, as an emanation of Divinity, demands from men profound consideration of its claims, as well as prompt acceptance of its benefits, and perfect subjugation to its laws. In grace, as in nature, the final purposes of God must be contemplated, in order to the full developement of their magnificence, and to the display of that eternal wisdom, power and goodness, which are the origin and end of each.

But before entering on the details of the subject, it may be desirable to notice in what department of the school of Christ the character to be brought forward received that training under which she made so great proficiency, as to entitle her to be exhibited as an example to the Christian Church : and if the spirit of a pure and universal piety, pervading the whole heart and life, allows her claim to be adduced as a bright specimen of the efficiency of evangelical religion, must not candour also admit, that that species of Christianity, whose type she received, and which the world has chosen to designate by the name of "Methodism," contains within its system those principles of light and energy, which merit nobler epithets than those which generally assail it, from a prejudiced and undiscerning world ?

Neither to the philosopher, nor the philanthropist, can this subject be a matter of indifference, or of cold speculation. A machinery of so much moral power as that which, at the commencement of the last century, was put in motion, under special instrumentality, by the revival of religion which then took place, and which still continues to propel its influence through wider and still widening circles, cannot but invite consideration, and excite much interest in reflecting minds. Such, accustomed to connect the links that form the chain of providence, will trace the steps of prescient mercy, preparing, by a more extended and effective Christianity, a barrier against the influx of those dark and dangerous principles which, in more recent times, have poured their poisonous tide, with an impetuous violence, through almost every quarter of the globe. Infidelity and insubordination have daringly unfurled the banner of defiance against Divine and human government. The standard has been grasped with desperate energy ; and had the counteraction of religious principle been less effective, still more fatal would have been the consequences to the general interests of mankind. By the arrangements of a gracious Providence, a system of instruction was prepared and organized, peculiarly adapted to that class of society against which infidelity, and its attendant evils, forsaking the misty regions of philosophical speculation, now insidiously direct their aim.

It has justly passed into an aphorism, that "whatever is novel in religion must necessarily be false." Methodism had no novelty to present to the world. The doctrines it propounded were the great and leading principles of evangelical truth, laid down in the Scriptures, and contained, not only in the formularies of the Universal Church, but also in those of the Church of England, of whose communion its distinguished founder, the Rev. John Wesley, was an attached and a conscientious member. It was in spirit, rather than in substance, that it differed from that established form of Christianity from which it took its rise.

Numerous causes had conspired to check the course of that revival of religion, which the era of the reformation had seen so gloriously commenced. Supineness and fanaticism contributed each its quota, to obscure the truth which then emerged from long-impending night. A new impulse had become essential; the zeal that animated the reformers required rekindling from the altar-fires of Heaven. To accomplish this important purpose, the providence of God selected its own agency; and from the bosom of the Church of England raised up a class of men, whose holy zeal, and almost apostolic labours, roused the dormant and decaying spirit of religion, and proclaimed a vital and transforming Christianity in every quarter of the land.

Not without sacrifice were these chosen instruments to be honoured as the special messengers of Heaven. Earnestness, which, in the pursuit of earthly objects, men esteem a virtue, when exercised on the important interests of religion was construed to imply the absence of sobriety of mind. Exclusion from their usual sphere of ministerial operation was the consequence of their irregular proceedings; and censure, persecution, and reproach were plenteously awarded, in return for sufferings, labours, and privations of no ordinary kind. To these they cheerfully submitted, in the meek and animating spirit of that pure philanthropy which is originated only by the love of God.

But while human judgments, urged by human passions, misinterpreted the zeal and labours of these holy and devoted men, the seal of the Divine acceptance attested God's approval of their work. Sinners listened to the voice that warned them of impending danger, and awoke from the deceitful dream of false security; the Gospel, faithfully proclaimed, became the power of God to their salvation; and its legitimate effects were manifested in a renovated spirit, and a holy life. Thus, by the enlightening and ameliorating influences of a spiritual and vigorous ministry, were thousands rescued from the toils of sin ; and on the surface of society, to a considerable extent, especially upon those orders of it most accessible to danger from the peculiar spirit of the age, a healthful and restraining moral power was spread.

But although Methodism has largely participated in the glory of preaching the Gospel to the poor, yet has it numbered among its trophies some of the wisest and the best of men ; men whose understandings could be subjugated only by the force of truth, and who were alike by education and by constitution far removed from the unnatural fervours of a wild fanaticism, and from the enthusiastic vanity of expecting to attain an end without the use of means. By minds thus powerful and comprehensive has this revival been regarded as the work of God ; nor have they been ashamed of yielding up their spirits to its influence, or of being found co-operators in promoting its extension through the world.

To the enlightened intellect, no line of conduct appears so like fatuity, as that which slights concerns of everlasting moment, or turns with proud contempt from the realities of the eternal world. A form of Christianity, therefore, whose chief speciality was, that it was in earnest, would have little to conflict with in such minds. Among the friends and adherents of the Wesleys, many such characters were found; and if from all classes of society may be largely selected those who have not only given their sanction to the economy established by these eminent men, but who have themselves been formed by it to an elevation in piety and virtue to which they might not otherwise have attained, may not Methodism, like Christianity, appeal for judgment, from the prejudices and passions of men, to its results in the exaltation of the human character, and the general improvement of society?

These observations, it is deemed proper here to make, in order that the position occupied by the early Methodists may be distinctly understood, and a full and just light thus cast upon the portrait which is now to fill the scene. Although these things, at a period comparatively not far distant, were known familiarly, yet their contemporaries are now passed away. Events and personages sink rapidly into oblivion; and reminiscences that should be cherished, fade like evening shadows from the mind.

On the young the expectations of the Church repose: by them, therefore, it is devoutly to be wished, that example in its forceful influence should be felt. That this influence may not, in the present instance, be enfeebled by unfounded and fastidious prejudice; that the candid and inquiring may be prompted to investigate a subject which now forms material for historic record; and, especially, that the claims of personal religion may be seriously weighed and duly estimated:—these comprise the reasons that have induced the author to prefix this Introduction to the following work.

MEMOIR

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH MORTIMER.

CHAPTER I.

" You will see what manner of persons the Spirit of God does form."—VENN.

THAT biography which comprises incidents of multiform and stirring interest, is, undoubtedly, to the majority of readers, most attractive; but this is seldom furnished in the course of ordinary life. There is, however, another, and perhaps a richer, source of pleasure and improvement, to those who can dispense with objects so exciting, and retire from sensible and outward things to the interior chambers of the mind. To these it is a pleasant, and an instructive, exercise, to learn the history of other minds, whether developed in the excursions of genius, the patient and laborious efforts of science, the sublime walks of philosophy, or the still higher regions of Divine truth. The memorials of intellect have an intrinsic value: light is propagated as from mirror to mirror, and its beams are rendered, not only more diffusive, but more intense.

There is yet an inner shrine: it is the region in which the immortal spirit holds converse with its Maker, and transacts the concerns of eternity. This is the sphere which is now chiefly to occupy attention; though, while studying the principal subject, many intervening ones may be anticipated, which will at once illustrate and diversify the scene.

To ascribe glory to her Saviour, and to promote the welfare of her species, were objects of supreme desire to HER, who now, from the retirement of domestic life, is summoned as a bright example of the power and excellence of Christian piety. To a character so humble, and so free from ostentation, publicity on lower grounds would have been irksome and annoying; but for such ends, she scrupled not, through life, to make innumerable sacrifices of personal and private feeling; nor would she, from the tomb, refuse to reiterate, with more impressive emphasis than ever, those holy, useful, and important lessons which, while on earth, by precept and example she sedulously strove to teach.

From the pen of MRS. MORTIMER herself will be derived the annals of her early life. This document was, at the request of her late husband, H. W. Mortimer, Esq., prefixed to a journal, in which, for more than twenty years, she registered, not only the occurrences of life, but more particularly such spiritual perceptions, and trains of thought and feeling, as in succession exercised her heart and mind. She ran her course with circumspection and internal vigilance; and the result was, a consistent exhibition of the graces and the virtues of the Christian life.

"My father's name," says Mrs. Mortimer, "was John Ritchie. He was a native of Edinburgh; and, in the reigns of George the Second and George the Third, served many years as a surgeon in the navy. He was a sensible, amiable, well-informed man, fond of retirement, and had a great taste for the beauties of nature. He feared God, and in all things acted conscientiously; received the message of the Gospel with joy; and welcomed its ministers to the hospitalities of his house. A nautical life was not congenial to his feelings: as soon, therefore, as he conveniently could, he sought for a quiet retreat in some retired spot. A kind Providence directed his steps to a pleasant village in the lovely valley of Wharfdale. Here he pitched his tent, and shortly afterward married my mother, Beatrice Robinson, of Bramhope. After the birth of my brother, my parents removed to Otley; where, on February the 2d, 1754, it pleased God to bring me into this land of shadows. My early days were passed in peace and pleasure. I was naturally cheerful; my chief trouble was the pain I felt when I had grieved my relatives or friends. The restraints of a strictly religious education fixed around my young mind bounds which were never wholly broken through. From a child, I was taught to believe that

God hears and answers prayer; and was soon convinced, that it was the best means of preventing evil, and of obtaining good. When prayer was neglected, every thing went wrong. Thoughts of the day of judgment, and a conviction that I was not prepared to meet it, often made me serious, when only eight years old. But these impressions were transient; I knew nothing of the depravity of my own heart; and they were easily effaced by the increasing volatility of youth.

"When about twelve years of age, a lady in our neighbourhood (Mrs. H.) requested my father to bring me with him to pay her a visit. She was the last sister of an old family which my father had professionally attended; and lived in the family mansion at L——. This lady grew so fond of me, that at length she would not let me return home. I had here many things to bear that were not pleasant; but I soon saw, that if I could but endure the strict discipline to which I was subjected, it would prove of excellent use. This helped me to bear a kind of treatment for which in subsequent life I have been truly thankful. My Lord prepared me here for many things through which I have since been called to pass. I was introduced into company and habits very different from those to which I had been used at home. The former flattered my vanity, and made me more willingly submit to the restraints imposed upon me. Mrs. H. was a strict moralist, but at that time, I fear, a stranger to the doctrines of the Gospel, and very much prejudiced against the Methodists; against whom she also strongly endeavoured to prejudice me. In process of time she succeeded; and I was often really ashamed to own that my parents attended their ministry. Indeed, I went so far as to use my endeavours to prevent them; often repeating the tales I had heard, and wishing, at least, that they would not receive Mr. Wesley into their house; but all I could say had no effect: they tried to remove my objections; but, who are so blind as those who will not see? I pursued my follies, and cared not how little I was at home; but in the midst of all this I was unhappy. Sometimes I wished for greater liberty to indulge myself in all the follies of life, and thought, 'Surely if I could be gratified in this respect, I should find the rest I am so fruitlessly pursuing.' "

This sketch exhibits the writer's characteristic ingenuousness and simplicity; but a crisis was at hand, on whose issue hung the form and tenor of her future life,—a period of decision which was to fix her choice on God, or yield her up to the illusions of a fascinating and deceitful world. Too often has the youthful subject of Divine grace been induced to make a false and fatal compromise with conscience; and under such circumstances to sacrifice the friendship of Heaven, and the interests of eternity, in order to run in giddy chase after those vanities which, like the rainbow on the passing cloud, continually elude their grasp. Such, in the present instance, most happily was not the case.

Mrs. Mortimer proceeds to state, that family arrangements occasioned the removal of her patroness, Mrs. H., to York, whither she accompanied her. "And here," she says, "I had the opportunity of indulging myself, beyond what I could reasonably have expected, in all the vain amusements of the world. But still my poor mind, like Noah's dove, could find no rest. I strictly attended to religious duties, but was fond of plays, cards, and company. I compared myself with others, and drew conclusions favorable to my own state; for though I did not make such high pretensions as many did, yet I thought myself a good Christian: and so effectually was my conscience at that time asleep, that though nothing but death separated me from perdition, yet I was insensible ot my danger; nay, more, so completely was I under self-deception, as to suppose myself rich in spiritual attainment, when at the same time I was a poor, deluded, miserable sinner, obnoxious to the just displeasure of almighty God."

But this darkness was shortly superseded by the true and heavenly light. That heart, whose expanding desires after happiness the world, specious and pretending as it was, could not satisfy,—that spirit which even in the formalities of religion could find no repose,—was soon to meet its proper object, and taste a pure, substantial, permanent felicity in holy and delightful friendship with the only Source of good.

"In the year 1770," continues Mrs. Mortimer, "my friend Mrs. H. took a journey to London. She said, were I to accompany her, it would introduce me more into life than would be proper at so early a period; and that I should, therefore, visit my parents during her absence. This was a gracious providence for me. Mr. Wesley came to Otley, and I was pleased with him in company; yet such were my prejudices at that time, that I would not go to hear him preach. The curate of Otley, the Rev. James Illingworth, was a spiritual man; but although I had been accustomed to attend the services of the establishment both on Sundays and on week days very regularly, yet, to my shame I must confess, I was an utter stranger to the blessed doctrines which its articles and homilies contain. Mr. Illingworth particularly insisted on the natural depravity of man, on justification by faith only, the new birth, and the influences of the Holy Spirit. These subjects were new to me, and when I first heard him, he greatly attracted my attention; but I heard for others, and often said to myself, 'This is very necessary for persons that have been openly immoral;' but I still remained ignorant of my own deep interest in them, until it pleased the Holy Spirit to remove the veil from my heart."

Peculiar circumstances at length induced the young inquirer to enter conscientiously into the examination of these momentous subjects; and the result was, an assurance that they were divinely true, and infinitely important; and that she had incurred an overwhelming load of guilt and condemnation in having suffered her attention to be so long diverted from them, by those frivolous concerns which had hitherto engrossed her thoughts and time. The Holy Spirit powerfully impressed her mind with the conviction, that, in spite of her pretensions to religion, she yet knew nothing of that change of heart which is implied in those emphatic words of the Redeemer, "Ye must be born again." A view at the same time was given her of the spiritual character and obligation of the law of God, such as she had never had before. The denunciations of Scripture against transgressors fell suddenly and powerfully upon her mind: "I stood," she says, "like a criminal arrested, tried, found guilty and condemned before the bar of God. Until that time, I had been without fear as to the safety of my spiritual state; now, all the Divine threatenings against unbelievers stood in full force against me. I became dead to all my false hopes; yet still cherished the idea, that I might possibly be saved as a sinner through the atonement of Christ. For some time I suffered exquisitely; my mind dwelt upon little but the thunders from Mount Sinai; I prayed much, but was afraid to open my mind to any one;—first, lest it should be supposed I had been guilty of some heinous sin;—and next, for fear I should be called a Methodist. I plainly saw, that if I pursued what now appeared to me to be real religion, I must give up the world, and become such a person as my friends, especially Mrs. H. and her connections, would utterly reject."

Aware of the critical nature of her circumstances, her embarrassment and distress became great. Decision either for God or the world could be delayed no longer; a choice must now be made either for time or for eternity. Those flattering views of temporal advantage which she had so fondly cherished, she must now relinquish, and exchange the friendship of the world for the reproach of Christ. The struggle for a season was severe, but grace was given to make the sacrifice; and shortly, in that real happiness which true religion can alone supply, she felt that she had received a rich equivalent for the surrender she had made.

Her course was now comparatively unperplexed. Freed from the entanglements and vacillations of divided purpose, she was prepared with concentrated diligence and earnestness to give her whole attention to those interests, which in all their vast importance rose distinctly on her view. She records her feelings in the following words:—

"From this time the light began to shine into my heart. I had a strong and constant hope, that God, who had disclosed to me my danger, and had also shown me that he had prepared a remedy, would give me faith to make me whole, that, by receiving Christ as my justifying righteousness, my troubled conscience might obtain peace. This I now sought in all the means of grace. My tastes were changed: I had lost all relish for the gayeties of life; worldly company was a burden to me; and I no longer feared reproach. My one desire was to feel vital union with the sinner's Friend; and, to obtain this, I felt it easy to surrender all beside. But how I was to ascertain my interest in the covenant blood, I could not tell. However, I could pray that he who had promised 'in no wise to cast out those who come unto him,' would help me to come in such a manner, as would terminate in that Divine assurance of acceptance, without which I felt I could not comfortably live. He answered my prayer in the following manner: On one occasion, my soul being greatly athirst for God, I poured out my supplication before him, and he helped me to plead in a special manner the promises made to penitent sinners. I received Divine power to make them my own; and felt assured that He who knew no sin was made a sin offering for me, that I 'might be made the righteousness of God in him.' From this happy moment, peace, love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, flowed into my soul. I supposed my toil was over; but soon experience taught me, that my warfare was but just commenced. For some time I was all love, prayer, and praise; but painful circumstances soon convinced me, that the propensity to evil had been only dormant in my heart: wrong tempers yet remained. I felt their sinfulness, and had recourse to prayer and penitent confession before God. Instruction and encouragement were graciously vouchsafed; and He who is rich in mercy so visited me, that by the Spirit of adoption I was again enabled to call him 'my Father and my God.' I was now happy, but felt the need of a more full salvation, and was resolved to seek it earnestly.

"As a help to my spiritual progress, I thought I would regularly note down what passed in my mind, relative to this important subject; and on July 3d, 1771, began to execute my purpose. I wrote merely for private use, and found it led me to a more close inspection of my own heart. Often has my diary afforded me cause for thankfulness, but more frequently for humiliation. Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, but I have been unworthy and unfruitful. My Lord has dealt, and still deals, with me according to his abundant mercy. I owe all my blessings to the meritorious passion of my Saviour, Christ."

The preceding narrative, at a long subsequent period, was prefixed to the diary here referred to; which must now afford the clue to her progress through a long and valuable portion of life.

When Miss Ritchie commenced her journal, she was in her eighteenth year, and had entered with decided purpose on a course of Christian piety. That disorder of the understanding and affections which is the sad result of sin, had been in a great measure corrected by the transforming energy of grace. Early rescued by the hand of mercy from the sphere of worldly influence and example, her faculties in all their freshness were presented as a free-will offering at the shrine of her Redeemer, to be employed according to his will. The value of a course of piety commenced in early youth, eternity alone can fully show. Not only is it wise, while young, to recognize the claims of Heaven, and yield obedience to them; but it is incomparably easier, also, than a later choice. In a more advanced period inveterate habits, false associations, and pernicious principles, exert their several forces to obstruct the power of truth; and duties, cares, and trials multiply, which harass and perplex the spirit, and hedge up the path of life with thorns. To break through obstacles like these, requires no small degree of moral courage; while friendships and connections formed on worldly grounds augment the difficulty; and endless vacillation is too frequently the sad result.

Not such is the course of the unhesitating candidate for immortality: his steps are strengthened; and increasing light and blessing mark his path. Holy principles, resorted to on all occasions, rule the understanding; subjugate the will and the affections; and, originating holy habits, bring over to the side of virtue and religion one of the most powerful propensities in the moral constitution of man.

Thus was Miss Ritchie prepared for the career of life. The foundation of her future excellence was laid in deep as well as early piety;

and being firmly based, the superstructure rose proportionably high. There was, in truth, a harmony of parts, a general symmetry, that struck the eye of the beholder, and produced impressions of serene and graceful beauty, hallowing and refreshing to the mind.

Her journal opens with an ascription of praise to God for all his mercies, and indicates an humble, watchful spirit; but being written not for public but for private benefit, it cannot often be transcribed at large. Various extracts will, however, show the progress of her mind in knowledge and experience, and prove that she was not content to taste alone the blessings of salvation, but was ever anxious to promote the good of others, and to lead them to desire that mercy which she knew to be as free for them as she had found it for herself.

Humility, a deep sense of dependence upon Christ, and gratitude to him who had manifested so much love to her soul, mark the commencement of these records. On the 20th of July, 1771, she says, "My soul was humbled in the dust before God while engaged in prayer. At present a deep sense of my unworthiness rests upon me. Lord, save me every moment, or I shall perish! Increase my faith, and give me power over my enemies! What has Jesus purchased for a fallen race? Life, light, and immortality! He has called me out of darkness into his marvellous light, and is at this moment precious to my soul. Lord, sanctify me throughout body, soul, and spirit, that I may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name!"

How early she endeavoured to improve the grace received, will appear by what follows: "I went to B., and found liberty to speak on sacred subjects; and, as God enabled me, I declared the truths belonging to salvation to Mr. S.'s family. My mind was pained to see such sensible people so entirely ignorant of the things that make for their peace. God grant that they may know the day of their visitation, lest these things should be hidden from their eyes!

"I visited my brother in his affliction, and found much liberty in praying with and for him. To-day I have been at L., but had no opportunity of speaking for God: I could say but a few words, which were forced, and no notice taken of them. But I did not forget to pray, 'Lord, turn their hearts!'"

While her sympathies were thus excited in behalf of her friends, opportunities of usefulness were preparing for her. A class of children was committed to her care; and she was called occasionally to take part in acts of social worship with her Christian friends.

On another occasion, she says, "I have felt this day great thankfulness to God, for the change wrought in me by Divine grace. I have seen many pursuing death, in the error of those ways in which formerly I took as great delight as they. I well remember the time when I should have run with the foremost to these and similar diversions. What makes me now to differ, but grace? I feel no kind of desire after these things. They are mean and trifling, and unworthy the pursuit of a rational and immortal being. My God, let thy love ever be my delight!"

It is worthy of remark, that she did not here start the inquiry, how far she might advance toward the precincts of danger, without positive transgression. Nor was she solicitous so far to widen the narrow path, as to admit of any doubtful accompaniments. Her heart was upright, her conscience tender; her feelings were alive to higher pleasures; and she courted no casuistry to convince her, that the friendship of the world is *not* enmity with God. Having tasted the living water in its crystal freshness, she thirsted not for earth's less limpid streams.

But though the vanities of life had ceased to interest, new sources of enjoyment were unfolded to her spirit in fellowship with God, and in acquiring more extended knowledge of those truths which sanctify and elevate the heart of man. The public means of grace she found subservient to this purpose; and under sermons, as well as at the table of the Lord, expresses thankfulness for benefits received. "I fed," she says, "on Christ in my heart by faith, and anticipated with joy an eternal union with him." Again: "I went to the house of God, in full expection of a blessing, and was not disappointed. A gracious sense of the Divine presence rested upon me. I was humbled under a view of the defilement of my nature ; yet felt myself entitled to lay claim to the promise made to those that mourn. A consciousness of my unworthiness rests upon me. I feel that by grace I am saved."

Accustomed to observe the movements of her own heart, she felt that there was much within that needed the renewing operations of the Holy Spirit. This led her to pray earnestly for a more powerful work of grace ; for an entire deliverance from those roots of evil which, she was conscious, were not eradicated from her nature, and were, therefore, under circumstances of temptation, prone to rise, although not suffered to prevail. On this subject she expresses a most lively feeling of anxiety. She felt a war within, and earnestly implored that she might gain the victory.

"The corruptions of my heart," she says, "have only lain still, that they might rise with redoubled force. Satan has employed his whole artillery against me ; and I have been tempted to wander after creatures, to impatience, anger pride, and self-complacency. But I have been kept from outwardly yielding. The Lord knows my heart, and I can appeal to him that I sincerely desire to be delivered from all unholy tempers : they break my peace, and bring me into bondage. If I parley with my enemies, they prevail. I find I must fly to Christ, or perish : when I do so, I am delivered from all my anxious doubts and fears."

On July 5th, 1772, Miss Ritchie continues,—

"Since I wrote last in my journal, I have been on the brink of eternity.

> 'The opening heavens around me shone,
> With beams of sacred bliss.'

My hope was full of immortality, and my anchor cast within the vail. I found the Lord's work was not finished, but knew he would perfect what was lacking; and am now thankful that he has again blessed me with a measure of health.

"Last Tuesday, that venerable servant of God, Mr. Wesley, came here. I had often wished to see him while I was ill, and now my desire has been kindly granted. 'The lips of the righteous feed many.' He preached to large and attentive congregations, and I found myself much profited. He went to Parkgate on Thursday; I accompanied him and Mrs. Wesley in the chaise; and as we walked up the hill he discoursed with me on spiritual subjects. He was humble as a little child: and on my telling him that when I was ill I had a great desire to see him, yet was content under the privation, believing we should soon meet in heaven, he replied, 'Well, God gives us to meet on earth, that we may meet in heaven.' I told him how often it had been said to me, 'You are too ardent to hold out long,' and that Satan had made this a subject of temptation: he said, 'I have observed, that few who have set out in good earnest turn back; but of those who set out coldly, one out of five generally does. Be not discouraged therefore,' he added; 'for there are more on your side than against you.' Under the sermon on Thursday evening I felt my ideas of holiness greatly enlarged. May the desires I now feel be strengthened, and my soul be watered with the dew of heaven! Mr. Wesley afterwards gave me much counsel, entreating me to be in earnest, and to persevere in prayer and the improvement of my time; as on the present moment hung the issue of my future course. He inquired what books I read; recommended 'Young's Night Thoughts;' and promised to give a list of such as he thought might be useful. I find I can be free and simple with this great and good man. His affability removes all restraint. I have been greatly profited by his company, and at present feel a strong desire to devote myself, body, soul, and spirit, to the Lord."

This appears to have been the commencement of that intercourse which afterwards ripened into so interesting and intimate a friendship. To her connection with Mr. Wesley, Miss Ritchie owed much of the celebrity of her early religious course; it exerted a powerful influence in the formation of her character; and she always justly ranked it among the highest and most valued blessings of her life.

With the ingenuousness of an upright mind, she continues to record her numerous internal conflicts. "To-day," she says, "the flesh seemed to war against the spirit; I felt an evil heart, which preferred the creatures to God; but, resorting to prayer, I was set free, and my affections fixed on their proper object. Talking too much, even on the things, and with the people of God, has brought darkness on my mind. How much do I need watchfulness! Through speaking unguardedly I have been brought into heaviness. I had no intention to deceive, and immediately acknowledged my mistake, both to God and man, and obtained forgiveness. For the future I will endeavour not to speak positively about any thing. Lord, help me to be watchful! I desire to walk in the narrow path.

"February 2d, 1773.—This day I enter on my twentieth year. How little of my time have I devoted to the service of the best of beings! Even since I made a profession of religion, how many moments have I wasted! How little proficiency have I made in the Divine life! I am not yet altogether spiritual; but have great need of humiliation before God, on account of my non-improvement of his many mercies. May I now begin to live! As I this day enter on another year of my natural life, let me begin my spiritual course afresh! Saviour, let me die to sin; seal my peace, and take up thy abode in my heart!

On the same occasion, in the following year, she adds, "I might, by this time, have been a tall cedar in Lebanon; at present, I am but a dwarf. Yet, when I consider what I once was, I must acknowledge, that the Lord has wrought a great change in me. He gives me power to love him; and, on examination, I think this power, during the last year, has not been impaired, but increased. My desires are stronger after conformity to the Divine image; the old man is weakened, and sin, though not dead, does not reign in me. I have received help in the hour of trial; and have been brought thus far by my heavenly Father. May my future life show forth his praise! How needful is self-examination! If I did not attend to this, I should soon lose ground. It is only by the light of the Spirit that I can discern my true state: I believe he will not suffer me to be deceived; for I would be upright in heart before him, and such as he can approve.

"April 4th.—I have made but little progress. The corruptions of my heart have been very lively. However, though my enemies have fought against me they have not prevailed. Needless cares have harassed and oppressed me; but Jesus is the sinner's friend. He saw the sorrows of my heart; and as a calm after a tempest has been the quiet which his soothing presence has diffused. Without God, what a wretched thing is life!"

On this principle she proceeded, exercising a strict vigilance over herself in every thing, whether external or internal; and bringing every temper, word, and work, to the test of that standard to which she strove to rise.

A love of holiness, a constant and an intense desire to be conformed to the great pattern of perfection, is the characteristic principle of the regenerated mind. Sin, in its essence, as well as in its ramified developements, is viewed as the most heinous and offensive object; and abhored as utterly repugnant to the will of the supreme Creator, and subversive of his moral government. To be freed from its defilement, as well as from its guilt and awful condemnation, is the object of the Christian's ceaseless prayer; to which desire and duty he is urged both by the promises and the requirements of the word of God. To "be renewed in the spirit of the mind," Eph. iv, 23, 24; to "put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness," which is "renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him," Col. iii, 10; is the charge of the apostle to those who, by himself, had been taught the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. On these, and on innumerable corresponding passages, are fixed the faith and hope of those more elevated spirits who, not satisfied with elementary principles, desire to follow on to the attainment of those higher privileges, whereby they may be fitted for more perfect fellowship with God on earth, and rendered fully meet for the inheritance of saints in heaven.

Yet, while the hallowed soul rejoices to contemplate the perfections of the Deity, and feels that to reflect his glory is its highest bliss and privilege; its sense will be proportionably poignant of its own infirmity, and of the imperfection of its most devoted services. Hence, on the mediatorial work of the Redeemer will rest its only hope for pardon and acceptance. Placed under a gracious dispensation, through the sacrifice and intercession of the great High Priest, a constant application of the benefits of this mysterious scheme of mercy will be felt to be essential to its peace and purity, to what degree of holiness soever it may happily attain.

Under a ministry which insisted largely on the fulness of the grace of Christ, and on the energy exerted by the Holy Spirit to subdue corruption, and to eradicate the seeds of evil from the heart of the believer, Miss Ritchie, habituated to self-examination, felt her own deficiencies; and earnestly aspired to this more elevated state of grace. To the affecting exercises of her mind on this important subject, her diary bears frequent witness. Having chosen Christ as her exclusive portion, she resolved to pray for the fulfilment of those promises which, through his name, insure the highest blessings to the humble and believing heart; and, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, she was, through faith, admitted to a more enlarged acquaintance with that perfect law of liberty, which, while it annihilates the state of servile bondage, produces unconstrained obedience, on the pure and elevated principle of love.

About this time, Mr. Wesley again visited Yorkshire, and she was favoured with many opportunities of attending his ministry, as well as of enjoying his conversation; from both of which she derived great advantage. "On May the 4th," she says, "I accompanied Mr. Wesley to Birstal. He inquired how the Lord had brought me to himself. I found great liberty, and spoke my mind on that subject without reserve. Indeed, this opportunity was a privilege I did not expect. I trust I shall reap lasting benefit from it. On the following Sabbath, while pleading with the Lord in prayer to make me holy, he greatly blessed me, by a powerful application of that promise, 'I am thy God.' I felt unutterable peace; and the cry of my soul was, 'Let thy love alone dwell in my breast!' I was conscious that a blessed change was effected within me. The Lord was very near, and made me truly happy in himself. Such a Sabbath I never knew before.

"On Monday we were favoured with the presence of the venerable saint, Mr. W., at our house. He engaged in prayer with me, and encouraged me much to go forward, by enlarging on the grace and love of the Redeemer, and on his present readiness to save; warning me, at the same time, to beware of pride. This morning, before four o'clock, he left us. I feel my esteem for him much increased; and my regret at parting was alleviated by a hope, that, should we meet no more on earth, we shall at last meet in heaven. His charge to me, on taking leave, was, 'See that you become altogether a Christian.'"

A day of sweet, serene, and cheering sunshine now dawned upon her spirit. Those clouds of unbelief and sin, which had so often interrupted her enjoyment, by intercepting from her view the light of life, were happily dispersed. A steadfast faith in God, through Christ, brought with it an establishment in peace and holiness; which rendered her victorious when assaulted by temptation, and kept her enemies beneath her feet. Not in the language of complaint, but with a deep and lively gratitude, she now records her more matured and evangelical experience of the power of saving grace; and, May 13th, thus writes:—"What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? He is good indeed! I feel his power, and taste his love! May all my faculties show forth his praise! I have been favoured, this day, with a letter from Mr. Wesley: it has been much blessed to me. By the help of God I will choose the more excellent way. I cannot doubt but that he has purified my soul; I feel power to cast myself every moment upon Christ; I am nothing, but he is all in all. The life I now live, is indeed a life of faith in the Son of God; and if I know any thing of my own heart, it is the Lord's. I love Him with every faculty of my soul, and only wish to be approved of him. I feel great deadness to the world, and love to the souls of men. I could do any thing to bring them to Christ! Amidst much weakness and ignorance, I trust the Lord will give me grace to distinguish between temptation and sin."

The following extract from the letter here referred to, will exhibit the commencement of a correspondence which Miss Ritchie always justly valued, as a high and special privilege; and acknowledged, consequently with becoming gratitude. Mr. Wesley's lively, forcible, and interesting method of instruction, on the most solemn and affecting topics, is strikingly evinced in these communications, as well as his parental and solicitous concern for the complete developement of those incipent graces which, beneath the fostering influence of the Holy Spirit, he believed to be advancing to no ordinary measure of maturity. The animating and entire decision of his own energetic piety, he was eager to infuse into the mind of this very promising pupil with respect to whom, however, that title was shortly merged in the more honourable and endearing name of "friend."

May 8th, 1774, Mr. Wesley thus writes:—

"It is not common for me to write to any one first: I only answer those that write to me. But I willingly make an exception, with regard to you: for it is not a common concern that I feel for you. You are just rising into life; and I would fain have you not almost, but altogether, a Christian. You cannot be satisfied with right notions, neither with harmlessness: no; nor yet with barely external religion, how exact soever it be. Nay, you will not be content with a *taste* of inward religion. This it has pleased God to give you already. You know in whom you have believed; you have tasted of the powers of the world to come; but,

'A taste of love will not suffice,
Your soul for all his fulness cries.'

Cry on, and never cease, 'Jesus of Nazareth, take away all my sins!' Write freely to

"Yours affectionately,
"J. Wesley."

To this letter, a part of Miss Ritchie's reply is as follows:—

"*Otley, May* 23*d*, 1774.

"Rev. Sir,—On the Sunday morning you left us at Birstal, several of us joined in beseeching God to make us all his own. While I was praying that the enemies I had seen that day might be seen no more for ever, the Lord applied such promises to my soul as encouraged me much. Yet I hardly dared to lay hold on them; unbelief striving so hard to prevent my entering into rest. But the Lord continued so to bless me, that at last I could not doubt: all I feared was, the losing what I had received, which made me backward in speaking of it. I thought I would wait to see how it would be with me by-and-by. At present I feel I am nothing in myself; but Jesus feeds me with his love from day to day. On this account I find him very precious indeed; and to love him more and more, is all I want on earth.

"Private prayer has been very sweet to me of late. I find such holy boldness in telling Jesus my wants, as tongue cannot express: those wants are many; yet my chief request is, to be filled with all the fulness of God. How great is the blessedness of living by faith! May I prove it more and more, till faith is lost in sight!

"I hope, dear sir, you will reprove and advise me as occasion shall require; in doing which, you will greatly oblige your unworthy friend in the Gospel, E. RITCHIE."

Anxious, not only for high attainments, but for stability in the Christian course, Mr. Wesley again endeavours to instruct and stimulate his young disciple, by the following admonitions and encouragements:—

"*June 3d*, 1774.

"I SHALL much want to hear that you stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. It is absolutely certain, that you never need lose any thing of what God has wrought. He is able, and he is willing, to give you always what he has once given. He will do it, provided you watch unto prayer, and stir up the gift of God that is in you. There is one invariable rule which God observes in all his dealings with the children of men: 'Unto him that hath,' uses what he hath, 'shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly.'

"If you use the whole power that is given you, he will not only continue that power, but increase it day by day. Mean time, be not ignorant of Satan's devices."

"*June 23d*, 1774.

* * * * *

"It gives me pleasure to find, that you still stand fast in the state of grace, into which you have been admitted ; and that, in spite of many temptations. And these, indeed, you are still to expect ; for Satan neither slumbers nor sleeps, and he will strive to torment, if he cannot destroy : so that you are still called to 'fight the good fight of faith,' and thus to 'lay hold on eternal life.' One admirable help towards conquering all, is for believers to keep close together ; to walk hand in hand, and provoke one another to love, and to good works.

"If you should, at any time, be in doubt concerning any point, either of doctrine or practice, use me as a friend, and speak freely to yours affectionately, J. WESLEY."

Yet, although thus graciously saved, Miss Ritchie had still to prove that she was not exempt from those trials, and spiritual exercises, which are incident to a state of probation. She thus expresses herself on this subject : "Yesterday was a day of great trial. I did not wrestle against flesh and blood, merely, but against principalities and powers. Yet the Lord was my helper ; and I believe he permitted this, on account of an omission of which I had been previously guilty. May I be more watchful in future, and never shun the cross again!

"I feel continually my need of the merit of the Saviour's death. Many things happen, which, though they have no concurrence of my will, and for which, therefore, my Lord does not condemn me, yet are violations of that holy and perfect law which requires undeviating obedience; and, were it not for the atoning blood, would shut me out of heaven. How ignorant have I been! No state of grace, I feel, will exempt me from trials. What the Lord gives must be tried; but he that stands the fiery test, shall come out as fine gold, fitted for his treasury."

An improved experience is here manifest. By the recent teachings of the Holy Spirit she had learned the way of faith more perfectly; and the result was, a continued application to the covenant blood. Power, as well as light, had been communicated; so that she was not only enabled to discern the wiles of her spiritual enemies, but was also armed to resist them. Her resources, as well as her dangers, were better understood; and renewing grace had removed those impediments which had frequently obstructed her in the commencement of her course.

Walking in the light and liberty of the Gospel, she endeavoured to adorn it, by the usefulness, as well as the purity, of her life. The sick, the poor, and the afflicted, were objects of her kind solicitude. She ministered to spiritual and temporal necessity; and often felt her sympathies excited by the destitution, misery, and ignorance which met her view. Thankfulness for higher privileges, and a sense of the responsibility incurred by their possession, impressed her mind with salutary caution, lest the deposit should be negligently held. Self-denial she accounted an essential part of Christian discipline.

Another opportunity of intercourse with Mr. Wesley is noticed in her Journal, July 4th. The practised and discriminating eye of this venerable man discerned in his young disciple the promise of unusual excellence; he, therefore, with his wonted kindness and urbanity, encouraged her by special tokens of affectionate regard. "On Sunday," she says, "I heard my much honoured father preach at Tadcaster. I afterwards accompanied him to York, and enjoyed the same privilege. We then went to Malton; returned through York and Tadcaster, and reached Leeds on Wednesday. Here he preached again, and the next day at Wakefield, whence this faithful shepherd of the Lord's flock set out for Doncaster, and I returned with Miss Bosanquet (afterwards Mrs. Fletcher) to Cross-Hall, where I have enjoyed the privilege of passing a few days. I have greatly valued these opportunities: though too little time has been afforded for retirement, yet the Lord kept me as the apple of his eye."

Shortly after her return from Cross-Hall, she thus addresses her revered friend:—

"*Otley, July* 19*th*, 1774.

"Rev. Sir,—How infinite is the Saviour's love! I am lost in wonder! What has he suffered for me! and yet how little do I love him! How little am I capable of loving him! O that my heart may be enlarged and filled with God! But I stand by faith; and while I am looking unto Jesus, nothing can harm me. My shortcomings, and many weaknesses, you are not unacquainted with; but blessed be God for that blood which cleanseth from all sin!

"I had a blessed time while at Miss Bosanquet's, and had intended staying longer, but on Sunday I was fetched away, my mother being but poorly. I have abundant cause to be thankful for this dispensation: some time ago it would have tried me much; but love makes all things easy. I feel that Jesus enables me to sit calm on tumult's wheels. Since I came home, I have at times been in the fire; but this cannot harm while God is near. It cannot hurt the soul that cleaves to Jesus.

"May the Lord abundantly bless you, dear sir; and may every purchased and promised blessing be yours for ever.

"So prays your unworthy daughter,
"E. RITCHIE."

Mr. Wesley in reply, says:—

"*July* 31*st*, 1774.

"TRIALS you will have, but they will only be means of uniting you more closely to Christ. While your eye is singly fixed on him, your whole body will be full of light, and you will be enabled

'To trace his example, The world to disdain,
And constantly trample On pleasure and pain.'

While you are doing this, you will not find many doubts of the way wherein you should go. The unction of the Holy One will shine in your heart, and shine upon your path. If you should at any time be in doubt, speak freely to Yours affectionately,

"J. WESLEY."

Having proved the value of a Gospel ministry, she cherished an affectionate attachment to those instruments by whom the benefit had been conveyed. A lively interest in the cause of the Redeemer manifested true affiliation into the family of God. These dispositions were not merely the result of ordinary susceptibility, nor did they float upon the surface of her spirit in the form of unproductive sentiment. They were the genuine and devout emotions of a purified and thankful heart; and indicated, by their fruits, the principle from which they sprang. The following passage will exemplify their practical effect :—

"I was favoured with access to God, while joining with a friend to pray for our beloved ministers who are now assembled at their annual conference. We agreed to set apart this day for prayer and fasting. My spirit has been much refreshed ; and although I have not yet tasted natural food, I have been privileged to eat the bread of angels. I am much in spirit with our friends at Bristol. To-night we are to hold a watch-night, to pray for our teachers."

How primitive is this conduct, and how exemplary! Yet that her affectionate and pious interest in the work, and in the ministers of Christ, was not without an ample recompense in their solicitude, and care for her, appears by the succeeding letter from Mr. Wesley, whom, it seems, she had apprised that her health was in a delicate and precarious state:—

"*September* 1*st*, 1774.

"It is an admirable providence which keeps you thus weak in body, till your soul has received more strength. It is good that you should feel how very helpless you are, that you may hang upon him continually. Are you always sensible of his presence? In what sense do you pray without ceasing? Can you in every thing give thanks? and have you a witness in yourself, that all you say and do is well pleasing to him?

"Could you but use constant exercise in the open air, I think you would need no other medicine; but it is certain, be your body well or ill, all is best, as long as your soul is stayed on him; and why should not this be, without any intermission, till your spirit returns to God? Nay, with a continual increase! For this is your calling, to sink deeper and deeper into him; out of his fulness to receive more and more, till you know all that love of God which passeth knowledge.

"I hope you do not pass any day without spending some time in private exercises. What do you read at those seasons? Do you read, as it were, by chance; or have you a method in reading? I want you to make the best use that is possible of every means of improvement. Now is the time. Now you have the fervour of youth on your side. Now animal nature is in perfection. Now your faculties are in their vigour; and happy are you who have been enabled to begin your race betimes. I hope you are just now minding this one thing,—looking unto Jesus; and pressing on to the mark, to the prize of our high calling. O run, and never tire! So shall your love and zeal always be a comfort to

"Yours affectionately,

"J. WESLEY."

The insertion of this admirable letter at full length can require no apology. It must be regarded as a treasure, by every young Christian more especially. Miss Ritchie's reply to her venerable correspondent, is as follows:—

"*Otley, October* 18*th*, 1774.

"REV. SIR,—I am not worthy of the favour with which you indulge me; but this increases my obligation. O that God may reward you for your labour of love towards a poor insignificant worm! My dear mother has been very ill for some time; but is now, thank God, much better. Attending her and the family has taken up the greatest part of my time; but the Lord does all things well. I was enabled to praise him; for his dispensations are faithfulness and love. The Lord is a kind and indulgent father to me. May I be passive in his hands, ever crying, 'Not my will, but thine be done!'—for, let what will come, the soul that cleaves to Jesus, and rests in the will of God, shall experience perfect peace.

"To your important queries, I answer: I am in some measure always sensible of his presence, though, at times, I have a much deeper consciousness that God is here, than at others; and though my lips are not always employed in calling on the Lord, yet I feel the desire of my soul continually towards him, and my heart cries unto him without a voice, 'Do with me what thou wilt!' So that in this sense I pray without ceasing; and in every thing I can give thanks, because I know, whatever my Lord permits will work together for my present and eternal good. Indeed, I feel it does so; for even temptations and trials seem to fix me firmer on the everlasting rock. I am well assured, my Lord gives only what is needful. May patience, then, have its perfect work!

"As to your last query, I feel a continued sense of my great unworthiness, and the imperfection of all my words, thoughts, and actions; but Christ bears the iniquity of my most holy things, and, through him, the Father beholds, well pleased, a helpless worm. If I am in doubt of any thing I have said or done, (which has been the case sometimes,) instead of reasoning with the enemy of my soul, I fly as for my life to Christ, who, without upbraiding, tells me he is all my own. May I be enabled perfectly to love him, and worthily to magnify his holy name!

"I suppose by this time you have entered your winter quarters. May every one that hears you be prevailed on to follow the Lamb! May your unwearied labours be crowned with abundant success! May the face of the Almighty continually shine upon you! and may your soul be continually penetrated with his loving presence? So prays, dear sir,

"Your affectionate friend,

"E. Ritchie."

This letter, which is a beautiful counterpart to the preceding one, is valuable as an epitome of the religious attainments of the writer, at that period in her progress at which we are now arrived. It indicates no inconsiderable acquaintance with the spirit and genius of Christianity, as a gracious and an adequate provision for the delinquencies of human nature; securing, at the same time, the glory of God and the happiness of man. Its operation on her heart, by the power of the Holy Spirit, had now induced a blessed state of liberty and peace.

CHAPTER II.

"He who makes himself a denizen of God's world, abideth for ever; eternity is stamped on his enjoyments and pursuits."—Jebb.

The progress of Miss Ritchie's mind, in Christian knowledge and experience, has now been traced from that important period when she yielded fully to the teaching and convictions of the Holy Spirit, and made a solemn choice of Christ and his religion, in preference to the vanities and pleasures of a transitory and seductive world.

Through the process of a sound conversion, she passed from the disquietude of an awakened conscience, to the enjoyment of a state of deep and settled peace with God. Her joy was permanent and operative: its foundation was a sense of reconciliation to the God she had offended, through faith in the atoning sacrifice and mediation of her adorable Redeemer; and its result was, a holy dedication to the service of her Saviour of every power, and principle, and faculty, with which her nature was endued. Constrained by the mercies of God, as well as by a conviction of responsibility, she could not be supinely inactive, when pressing opportunities were presented for the diligent occupation of her talents, in the service of God or man.

In November, 1775, she was appointed the leader of a class, which she most justly designates "a weighty office." She entered on her charge, impressed with its importance, and deeply sensible of her incompetency to fulfil its duties, without much Divine assistance. These separate associations of the subjects of his ministry were formed by the profound and comprehensive wisdom of the venerable Founder of the Methodist Connection, for the purpose of adapting personal instruction to the case of every individual, and of bringing the whole body under kind and watchful ministerial discipline. The experience of a century has proved their salutary and effective operation. Their principle is founded in the sympathies of human nature, and recognized throughout the oracles of God. Social feelings are thus enlisted into the service of religion; the more difficult and abstract ministrations of the pulpit are brought down to special states and circumstances; a *surveillance* more minute than could without such aid be exercised, and a compactness, only to be gained by combination, may be ranked among the benefits resulting from this portion of the system of Wesleyan discipline.

To those whom observation or experience may have guided to reflection on the complicated character of man,—and by whom the human heart, in its inexplicable mazes, has been read and studied, and actions, words, thoughts, feelings, motives, analyzed,—it will appear a charge of no small magnitude to be entrusted with the oversight of others, and to incur, on their account, responsibilities to God and to his Church, The faithful and judicious exercise of such an influence as this charge implies, requires much caution, and no ordinary measure of the wisdom from above. Truth, to be effectually imparted, should be clearly understood ; and the work of grace upon the spirit must be personally experienced, before its progress can be traced correctly upon other hearts. Thus, genuine conversion, habits of reflective and consistent piety, acquaintance with the oracles of God, and wisdom, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, sought by prayerful meditation, to adapt his various counsels to the circumstances of his charge ;—these, with fervent zeal, and charity that can expand itself beyond the circle of its own immediate interests to sympathize with others in their difficulties, cares, and sorrows, are but in part the qualifications that should be found in him to whom the arduous office of a leader is assigned.

Such a class of persons, however, possessing in various degrees, the requisite efficiency, Mr. Wesley found among his early members ; and such have still been furnished, through the providence and grace of Christ. The stated ministerial visitations of these classes subjugate the whole to pastoral inspection, and give completeness to a system of instruction which, while embracing an enlarged circumference, combines and concentrates its energies, and acts with an effective vigour on each separate part.

On undertaking such a charge, it is not surprising to find Miss Ritchie timidly conscious of her own deficiency, and earnestly imploring assistance from above. She dared not disobey the call of duty; and, therefore, in dependence upon heavenly succour, entered heartily into a work for which she was peculiarly adapted, by a natural ingenuous simplicity of character, as well as by a lively and deep experience of the power of saving grace. Indeed, through her long Christian course, she was, in this department, eminently useful and acceptable. Clear in her own conceptions, unhesitating in her purposes, and uniformly vigilant, devout, and prayerful, she endeavoured to impress, on those who sought her counsel, the same decision, earnestness, and spirituality of mind. Her manner was attractive, lively, unembarrassed, kind, familiar; yet dignity attempered sweetness, and induced gratitude, affection, and respect. The sphere in which she moved, for many years, afforded ample scope for the employment of her talents in this interesting line. How often she was made the minister of mercy, in confirming the believer, in encouraging the mourner, in directing admonition to the trifling and lukewarm, and in addressing words of wisdom to the ignorant, the records of eternity will show.

Not long after her appointment to this office, she makes the following observations:—"I have been led much to meditate on the perfection of the human character of Christ. My mind has dwelt particularly on his love, his meekness, his humility, his resignation, and all those heavenly dispositions which he manifested here below. My soul aspires to imitate this bright example. I hear that word which says, 'Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' Therefore, in the exercise of faith and hope I wait for a more full conformity to him, my living Head. I bless his name who has already shown me so much mercy, as to keep me from desiring any thing that is not in accordance with his will, and that does not centre in himself."

These reflections indicate progressive piety and wisdom. In the person of the Saviour was exhibited the living form of holiness, instinct with its vital spirit. Hence, in this Divine exemplar the Christian sees his model; the pattern, after which he is to form his character; the mould of true perfection, into which his spirit must be cast. In this idea there is nothing undefined; a real substance is presented, which becomes the object of distinct perception, and may be calmly studied by the mind. The result of this contemplative and prayerful exercise the word of truth determines: "Beholding" Him, "we are changed into the same image, by the Spirit of the Lord."

On the commencement of the next year, after thankfully reviewing her mercies, Miss Ritchie observes :—"For some time past I have been enabled to live with a deep sense of eternal things upon my mind. I feel great deadness to every thing here below, and see nothing desirable but what will bring me nearer to God. Yesterday I felt much exposed to the suggestions of the adversary ; but the Lord preserved me from the power of temptation, and sustained my soul in humble resignation to his will. I was much blessed while reading the former part of the seventeenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. When I came to, 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye him,' I stopped, and prayed my Lord inwardly to speak. He graciously answered, and applied many precious promises to my soul. He said, 'I am thy salvation.' I felt his power, and with holy triumph exulted in the Lord of hosts.

"Some time ago, I was permitted to pass through much inward exercise: the powers of darkness were suffered to assault me in a manner I had not lately experienced ; but the Lord upheld me by his power. He gave me resignation to bear the fiery trial, rebuked my foes, and enabled me to feel the blessedness of enduring temptation. Let me, with fresh courage, take the field. Our conquering God will give the victory, and lead me into heights and depths of redeeming love which are yet unknown.

"I feel a fixed determination to pursue my way ; and am gathering up the powers of my soul into my great Restorer's presence, that he may give me strength, and employ it to his glory. I see time—a moment. But the importance of that moment fills me with a desire to live for Him alone, by whose almighty love I live at all."

From these and many similar quotations the spiritual and internal nature of her piety may be discerned. She truly lived a life "hid with Christ in God." Its joys and sorrows were alike concealed from the observance of the world; nor were its conflicts or its triumphs connected chiefly with the things of earth and time. Allowed to pass within the vail, she held communion with the ever-blessed Trinity. The propitiatory, sprinkled with the blood of the atoning sacrifice, was open of access; and the brightness of the glory beaming from between the cherubim was tempered by the still-ascending incense of the intercession of her great High Priest. On these, as on Divine realities, the contemplative view of faith was fixed; and while the Lord, the Spirit, who had removed from her heart that vail by which spiritual objects are excluded from the perception of the carnal mind, had taught her to discern her own interest in this mysterious and sublime economy, he showed her also, in unison with the explicit announcements of Scripture, that she was surrounded with other orders of intelligences than those which dwell in houses of clay. Thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, under the array of their respective leaders, both from above and from beneath, await, with intense interest, the issue of the conflict, so long pending, in this lower world. Every human spirit, as a part of the great whole, engages separately the vigilant attention of this mighty cloud of witnesses: man alone appears regardless of the ineffable importance of the position which he occupies; while fiends and angels, with an earnestness proportioned to their more extensive knowledge, mark every step of his eventful progress; and, to the utmost limit of permitted influence, obstruct or further him in his probationary career. To prompt to skeptical insensibility, on this important article of Holy Writ, is but a too successful stratagem of that deceitful enemy, whose machinations are so organized as to delude in order to destroy. The subject of this memoir was not seduced into his fatal snare. While she felt, that it was a part of the privilege included in "the communion of saints" to recognize a hallowed interest in "the assembly of innumerable angels," as well as a sublime and sweet association with the spirits of the just made perfect, she was also sensible of danger from that adversary, who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." But, though accessible to his attacks, she was not ignorant of his devices, nor unprepared to meet them. She knew that, "greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world," and "perfect love casteth out fear."

Her friendship with Mr. Wesley became increasingly intimate and valuable. His annual visits to the societies in that part of the kingdom afforded her frequent opportunities of personal intercourse; and, in the interim, she maintained with him a regular correspondence. With a view to the benefit of her health, (which was at this time extremely delicate,) as well as to promote her spiritual advantage, he frequently invited her to accompany him in his journeys through the surrounding country; and, on these occasions, introduced her to many valuable friends. Of one of these, Miss Roe, (afterward the wife of the Rev. James Rogers,) she speaks with peculiar interest and affection: "I feel," she says, "toward Miss Roe, what I have seldom felt toward any one. I believe, as dear Mr. Wesley expresses it, we 'are twin souls.'"

On her return from one of these excursions, she thus writes:—"May, 1776.—I have been with Mr. Wesley to the various places he has visited in this country; and have had, while travelling, many valuable opportunities for conversation. I thank God I feel my soul much strengthened, and my bodily health improved: I have enjoyed uninterrupted sunshine."

The following extracts from Mr. Wesley's correspondence, about this time, will show by what Scriptural and kind advices he strove to stimulate her progress in the paths of piety and holiness. No monasticism entered into his idea of religion; its essential characteristics were activity, beneficence, and love.

"*March* 17*th*, 1775.

"I trust you will find more and more opportunity of using whatever strength you have, even at Otley. Wherever the Lord revives his work, we are more particularly called to work together with him. Now, be instant in season, and out of season. Redeem the time. Buy up every opportunity. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening slack not thine hand, and God will give the increase."

"1776.

"The word of the Lord to you is, 'Feed my lambs.' Methinks I see you giving up yourself, as far as possibly you can, to that blessed work; carrying the weak, as it were, in your bosom, and gently leading the rest to the waters of comfort. Meantime your own soul will enjoy a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. If you find any perplexing temptation in your way, you should not scruple to let me know. Youth is the season for many of the most dangerous temptations incident to human nature. But, indeed, you are preserved from many of these, by your settled determination to slight all dreams of creature-happiness, and to give your heart to him who alone is worthy."

"1776.

"'He that followeth me,' says our Lord, 'walketh not in darkness.' Nothing can be more certain. Closely follow him, and you will never come into any darkness of soul: on the contrary, your light shall shine more and more unto the perfect day. Nothing but sin can bring you into confusion; and this, I trust, God has bruised under your feet. Surely, then, you are under no necessity of ever losing the least part of what God has given you. But you may stand fast in glorious liberty, till your spirit returns to God."

The following letter, addressed to a friend recently married, will exhibit the affectionate solicitude, as well as the fidelity, with which she availed herself of the privileges of Christian friendship. All earthly associations were, in her view, connected with eternity. Her intercourse with those she loved was, therefore, so conducted as to promote their preparation for a permanent reunion in those mansions of celestial glory, "where no enemy can enter, and whence no friend departs."

"*January* 16*th*, 1777.

"I am solicitous for your welfare, and earnestly wish you every blessing requisite for your present and eternal good. In many things the Lord has indulged you, and given you the desire of your heart. I trust you now inquire, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?' For, according to the sentiment of Dr. Young, 'if Heaven is tremendous in its frown, it is also formidable in its favours.' These are 'a call to duty, not discharge from care.' But for what does your heavenly Father call? He stoops to ask your love. He kindly saith, 'My son, give me thy heart.' Obey the gracious summons: lay your all at his feet.

"Be careful, my dear friend, that the outward things to which your change of situation exposes you, take not up too much of your thoughts. You are called to Mary's situation; she sat at the Redeemer's feet, and heard his voice,—that voice which faithful souls alone can hear. Nor should outward employments hinder close attention to the voice of God. But he always works in quiet minds: therefore, constantly strive in patience to possess your soul; and endeavour to keep your mind recollected; so shall you find, in the midst of outward hurry, that all is peace, and heaven, and God, within. But how shall my friend attain this blessedness? Our adorable Saviour gives the answer: 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' Yes, rest from all that is not God; rest from all your sin and strife; rest from the image of the earthly, into the image of the heavenly. Only come. Be determined, nothing short of this shall satisfy you. Plead the promises; strive to believe them; choose the most excellent path; and may the Lord the Spirit guide and bring you to the promised land! May my dear friend, and the partner of her days, drink deep of the well of life! May you be truly helps meet for each other! You should continually 'provoke one another to love, and to good works.' Be simple, free, and open with each other. Go on, mutually contending for your native heaven, always remembering that you are strangers and pilgrims here, as all your fathers were. Set your affections wholly on things above. When you are blessed, eat not your morsel alone; but tell him, whom God hath given you, what you feel; and jointly pray and praise together. You are not only to help each other for time, but chiefly for eternity. Let it be fixed in your minds, 'We are designed by Providence to make each other happy.' Therefore, stir each other up to seek for all the mind that was in the meek, the humble, the lowly Saviour. What a pattern! Follow the footsteps of His love; and study to help each other on, till both receive the starry crown.

"May God bless, keep, and preserve you! So prays yours in the bonds of Divine love,

"E. Ritchie."

But in the midst of many circumstances, pleasant and congenial to her best and purest feelings, there were other things sufficiently perplexing, through which, at this time, she was called to pass. Her health, that had been long precarious, became increasingly infirm. "I live," she says, "near eternity. For these two days, in a peculiar manner, I see, I feel, that I am on the borders of the grave. I am very weak in body, but happy in God. Something seems to tell me, I shall not long be an inhabitant of this world. Thy time, O Lord, is best; and I am in thy hands; do with me what thou wilt, only let me live or die to thee! I have a bad cough, and much pain in my side; perhaps my race is nearly run, and I shall shortly be at home. I feel power to give myself up into the hands of God. I cannot choose either life or death. The Lord's will be done."

"To see a young person in the very prime of life, gradually losing her strength, and flesh, and appetite, and visibly hastening to the grave; yet placid and meek, and well satisfied to be weak and to be sickly, and to be just what her Lord appoints,—is a striking object, not to be viewed by a considerate mind without much profit." So said a venerable clergyman of the last century; and the remark was strikingly exemplified in the present instance.

While struggling with disease that threatened fatal consequences, other trials overtook her. The severe and sudden illness of her father, who by paralysis was brought within the very verge of death, affected her extremely; her mother also was afflicted; and Mrs. H., the friend and patron of her early years, was called unexpectedly into another world. From a recent interview, in which religion had been made the topic of their conversation, she cherished the impression that a change had been effected, on that deeply-interesting subject, in this lady's mind. On the recollection of past circumstances, she records her gratitude to God, who had enabled her to choose the better part. "What is wealth," she adds, "to her who has now left this vale of tears, and could not purchase by it one moment's reprieve?"

Consumptive symptoms, which had been long incipient, at length assumed a very serious character, and threatened at no distant period to lay low the tabernacle of that spirit which had been early disciplined to take its place among existences of a superior order, and to enter on the rest reserved in glory for the saints of God. The preparation of her mind for this afflictive dispensation was evidenced by deadness to the world, increasing confidence in her Redeemer, progressive holiness, and faith, and hope; through which she realized her interest in the unseen glories of eternity. These dispositions seemed to strengthen in the prospect of approaching death. March 29, 1777, she observes:—"I have been very weak in body, but am kept sweetly dependent upon my Saviour: in his will I can and do rejoice. At present, I am threatened with consumption, and am under the care of Mr. Hey:* yesterday I was a little better, and went to the Lord's table: he met me, and graciously refreshed my soul. Christ is mine: my soul is truly alive, and my heart in heaven."

The following passage from a letter addressed at this time to Miss Ritchie by a very dear friend, adverts to a secret in psychological philosophy, which possibly may never be disclosed in time. "One circumstance," he says, "I will mention, though it is but a little one, which I have frequently observed: I scarcely ever receive a letter from you but just when you have been laid upon my mind more than usual. If at any time I feel a peculiar nearness to you, I expect to hear from you soon after. Can this be accounted for by the sympathy of spirits? or can spirits, as it were, attract each other, even at a distance?"

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* An eminent surgeon of Leeds.

This curious subject has not escaped the observation of some profound and philosophic minds. None but He who formed the inexplicable links which compose that chain of sympathy which connects man with man, can solve the mystery of these occasional illapses, which seem to indicate that there are latent faculties in the immortal spirit which can only be developed in a higher state of being, but may then be adequately and delightfully employed. In later life, Mrs. Mortimer was wont to converse with much interest on these indistinct intimations of embryo powers and faculties in man's immortal soul.

How much Miss Ritchie's circumstances were at this period calculated to awaken the sympathies of her friends, and how fully she was prepared to meet the conflict with man's most appalling enemy, the following extracts will evince :—" May, 1777. All praise to my adorable Redeemer, my soul is filled with love and thankfulness to him. For some days past I seem to have been taking large steps toward the grave. On Wednesday I set apart several little things to be given to my friends after my decease ; and, having ordered my funeral according to my mother's mind, I have now nothing to do but to continue looking to Jesus, until he take my spirit home. I feel that I have no trust but in him; every blessing I have received has been through faith in his name; and still, as a poor helpless worm, as a sinner saved, I come to him, and prove that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. Yesterday the adversary suggested, 'It appears all well at present; but how will it be when the last enemy really comes?' My Lord answered for me, by applying that portion of his holy word, 'Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end.' My soul was filled with praise, and still continues in a frame of thankfulness and love. I seem near my heaven, my eternal home. The doctors think me in such danger, that they say they may use means to alleviate pain, but have no hope of recovery. This news so elevated my spirit with the hope of being shortly with Christ, that for some time I seemed either not to have, or not to feel, so much pain as in general."

The following letter, addressed to Mr. Wesley, states the serious circumstances in which she was at this time placed :—

"*Otley, April 24th,* 1777.

"REV. SIR,—Welcome, thrice welcome, was your last kind letter. Tears of love and joy overflowed my eyes, and my heart was filled with thankfulness to find that you still favoured with your friendship the unworthiest of all your children.

"Since I wrote last, the state of my health has been much altered. At that time my complaint seemed just coming on; but as I have often had slight attacks which have been removed, I thought little of them: but it has pleased God that they have continued ever since, so that my strength is greatly decayed. I have much pain in my breast and side, accompanied with a little short cough. My fever is generally very strong in the afternoon; and when it goes off I am very feeble, and sometimes so low, that it is pain to me either to move or speak. But, glory be to God! I have not one anxious thought: to me to live is Christ, and to die would be great gain. Since my body has been weak, my soul has been truly happy: I feel on the wing for heaven; my affections are fixed on things above; and my spirit rejoices in hope of the glory to which I am hastening.

"May all the blessings of a covenant-God be yours! So prays, Rev. sir, your affectionate, though unworthy, daughter in Christ,

"E. Ritchie."

During this season of affliction, Mr. Wesley, being in Yorkshire, visited her several times. These proofs of his friendship were refreshing to her spirit; and she observes:—"My dear and reverend father has been always to me as the immediate messenger of God, and never more so than at present: his conversation led me to desire a still more close acquaintance with the Triune God. I parted from him under the impression that we should shortly meet in paradise."

That Mr. Wesley's mind received a similar impression, appears from the insertion in his Journal at the time. "On Friday, May 9th, 1777," he says, "I went to Malton, hoping to meet Miss Ritchie there; but instead of her I found a letter, which informed me that she was on the brink of the grave; but added, 'Surely my Lord will permit me to see you once more in the body.' I would not disappoint the congregation, but as soon as I had done preaching set out, and about four in the morning came to Otley. I minutely inquired into the circumstances of her illness; she is dropped suddenly into the third stage of a consumption, having one or more ulcers in her lungs, spitting blood, having a continued pain in her breast, and a constant hectic fever, which disables her either from riding on horseback, or bearing the motion of a carriage; meantime, she breathes nothing but praise and love. Short-lived flower, and ripe for a better soil!" He writes again:—"After preaching in the evening at Leeds, I pushed on to Otley. Here I found E. Ritchie weaker and happier than ever: I spent half an hour with her, to

'Teach at once, and learn of her, to die.'

And again:—"Thursday, June 5th.—About noon I came to Otley, and found E. R. just alive; but all alive to God. In the evening it seemed as if the departing saint had dropped her mantle upon the congregation,—such an awe rested upon them while I explained and applied, 'They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.'

"Monday 9th.—I spent one hour more at Otley. *Spectaculum Deo dignum!* I have not before seen so triumphant an instance of the power of faith. Though in constant pain, she makes no complaint. So does the glory of God overshadow her, and swallow up her will in his; she is indeed all praise, all meekness, and all love."

Such are the glorious triumphs of the Gospel. It shines forth in the perfection of its brightness, through the darkest shades of human life. Those who, standing (as it were) upon the verge of heaven, have been allowed to witness scenes like these, will not only, with the venerable Wesley, regard them as "spectacles worthy of God;" but they will feel that they are such as the power of God alone can exhibit, when it has wrought in the heart of man that salvation which extracts the sting from death. What calculation can compute the value of religion, or what infatuation equal the sin and folly of neglecting or despising its important claims?

Still anxious respecting the spiritual as well as physical circumstances of his suffering friend, Mr Wesley thus kindly urges his inquiries, shortly after the preceding interviews:—

"*June* 16*th*, 1777.

"I write a few lines on condition that you will not write, if it does you hurt; it certainly will, if you lean upon your breast, or if you write much at a time. But, perhaps, (of which you yourself must be the judge,) you might write a few lines now and then. Do you still find your will wholly given up? Have you no choice as to life or death? Have you no choice as to the manner of your death? Are you not afraid of the pains of dissolution? Can you freely part with all your friends here,

'And to an unknown somewhere wing your way?'

Do you never lose your consciousness of the presence of the Three-one God? And is your testimony of his Spirit, that you are saved from inward sin, never obscured? Are you always happy? Do you always enjoy a hope full of immortality? I ask many questions, that you may have an opportunity of being a witness for God: whether you live or die, I think in life or death you will not forget

"Yours affectionately,
"J. WESLEY."

Miss Ritchie's reply is as follows:—

"*Otley, June 24th,* 1777.

"REV. SIR,—Many thanks to you for the repeated proofs of your watchful care over me. Glory be to God! I feel my will wholly given up to him. I delight in what he chooses; and as to life and death, I am in a strait between two, and cannot choose either. The time when, and the manner how, I entirely leave to Him, who ordereth all things well; but am led to think that in a little time I shall be

> 'Where saints in an ecstasy gaze,
> And hang on a crucified God.'

Neither have I any fear of the pains of dissolution. The Lord gives me to believe, that dying will be like falling asleep in the arms of God; and the transporting thought of waking in the realms of endless day fills me with joy unspeakable. As to my friends, I never loved them better; but at God's command I freely leave them all. Death itself cannot disjoin our spirits, neither shall our bodies be parted long.

"I always feel the eternal God present; but of late my soul has thirsted for a fuller manifestation of the ever-blessed Trinity. Glory be to God, I constantly feel his Spirit witnessing with mine, that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin! From the time I first received this blessed testimony, I have never lost it. Of late it has been more strong, more permanent, more clear. Indeed, I am always happy, and sometimes unspeakably so. I ever feel my spirit peaceful, calm, serene. My hope is full of immortality: I feel a pledge of future bliss, and greatly rejoice in hope of being shortly in possession of that inheritance to which I am swiftly hastening. O what mercy has been, and still is, extended to me! I am a sinner, freely and fully saved by grace. I have but one desire; that is, to glorify God in time and in eternity.

"I continued till last Friday much as when you left me: since that time I have been rather worse. I trust you will continue to pray for me; but only ask that God's will may be done. In so doing you will greatly oblige, Rev. sir, your ever affectionate, though unworthy friend, E. RITCHIE."

The work of preparation being, however, thus effected, and her will surrendered to the will of God, the threatened stroke was mercifully turned aside. Toward the end of June, the violence of the disorder gradually abated; and the balance seemed to tremble between life and death.

In July, Miss Ritchie writes: "The violence of my dangerous symptoms is greatly decreased. I know not what my heavenly Father means to do with me. I am willing, should he see meet to spare me, to put to sea again. But his sacred will be done. I had almost gained the port, and thought eternal life secure; yet for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Under these improved circumstances, her venerable friend thus kindly addresses her :—

"*August 2d*, 1777.

"It is with great pleasure I learn that God has been pleased to lift you up from the gates of death; and that your strength is considerably increased, although you are far from being out of danger. When and in what manner was this change wrought? Can you impute it to any outward circumstance? How did you feel your mind affected when you found a return of strength? Did you rejoice or grieve? or calmly desire, 'Let the will of the Lord be done?' In what respects are you better than when I saw you? in what respects the same or worse? Give me as particular an account as you can. Do you find your soul as much alive to God as ever? Does not the corruptible body press down the soul? Do you feel faith's abiding impression, realizing things to come? Do you live in eternity, and walk in eternity?

"Yours affectionately,
"J. Wesley."

It is to be regretted that the answer to these queries does not appear.

In the course of a few months her health was surprisingly re-established, and her prolonged life presented, with grateful and devoted ardour, as a sacrifice to Him who had raised her from the borders of the grave. This gracious restoration she regarded always as an evidence of the power of earnest and believing prayer. Many special and fervent supplications, had been offered to the throne of grace on her behalf; and to their prevalence, through the Redeemer's intercession, she ascribed her renovated life. Yet, for many years, her health continued in a very delicate and precarious state; while circumstances of domestic trial made demands upon her strength and spirits, which she was but ill prepared to meet. But, through the whole, her tranquil confidence in God remained unshaken. Holy resignation, and a Divine assurance of her interest in his covenant-mercy, enabled her to reap increasing benefit from every chastisement, which she well knew was the correction of a father's hand. The afflicted state of both her parents, the loss, at length, of her beloved father, and her own infirmities, combined to discipline her spirit, and to test the sterling value of her piety.

On this subject, she thus writes to Mr. Wesley :—

"Since I wrote last, it has pleased the Lord to call me to much exercise both of body and mind. My dear mother was scarcely raised from her illness, before my father grew worse; so that we expected his dissolution every hour. He suffered so much from constant sickness, and from his other infirmities, that, though I felt the loss of a tender parent would affect me much more than I have sometimes, when at a distance, thought it would, yet I could not ask his life; but only cried, 'Lord, fully prepare him for thy kingdom, and let thy will be done!' It has pleased the Lord to restore him a little, and for some time he has not had those strangling fits. I do not remember that he has had one while sitting up, and he chose rather not to lie down at all, than to have an issue set. He sleeps most of his time, but has not attempted to go to bed for some weeks past. For this fortnight my dear mother has again been very ill. I am daily called to minister to their wants; and, blessed be God, though I have not all the time I used to have for religious exercises, yet I experience that 'obedience is better than sacrifice;' and my gracious Lord favours me with a constant sense of his approbation."

This last observation is not unworthy of remark. Miss Ritchie was practically pious; and her religion granted no release from necessary duties. It was nourished by habitual exercises of the heart, in faith and love to God; and when his providence required her to "show piety at home," she was prompt and willing to obey the call.

On the commencement of the year 1780, she thus expresses her continued sense of the Divine goodness:—"How gracious is my Lord! Words can ill express the happiness I have enjoyed in fellowship with him. In secret, prayer has frequently been lost in praise, while by faith I have anticipated joys to come.

"January 30th.—On the 25th, I went to Leeds; and, after a comfortable ride, met my dear friend Clapham, in peace. On Friday the 28th, Mrs. C., Mr. A., &c, and I, attended Mr. Benson and Miss Thompson to the old church, where they were solemnly united for life. After breakfast we went to Halifax, where I found dear Mrs. Crosby: we had a comfortable afternoon, and by Mr. Benson's desire spent most of the evening in prayer.

"February 14th.—For some time past, my

chief outward employment has been attending to my dear father, who, though still very poorly, is happy in God. May the Lord prepare him for the awful hour of death, and cheer him by his presence, while passing through the dreary vale!

"February 20th.—The last week has been a time of trial. My bodily strength declines daily, and my animal spirits have, at times, been very low. My mother is almost confined to her bed, and my father to his chair; and I am not able to do much to help them: yet I can praise the Lord; for he has some end to accomplish by these things, which nothing else would so well effect. May he give us all a spirit of resignation! I have sometimes had such a sense of the tender sympathy of the Saviour with his afflicted members, as I think I never had before."

In March, she says, "Mr. Wilson, the vicar, administered the sacrament to my dying father, who seemed much refreshed by partaking of those holy mysteries." Again:—"Last Tuesday, April 18th, my beloved parent was delivered from his sufferings. Angels carried him into Abraham's bosom. He was for some time speechless; but his countenance manifested the happiness of his soul. Though he had lived an humble mourner, he died a triumphant believer, declaring that he rejoiced in the great salvation of God, and that he felt the Redeemer to be unspeakably precious."

The day after Mr. Ritchie's decease, Mr.

Wesley came to Otley; and in his Journal thus writes:—

"April 19th, I went to Otley, but found Mr. Ritchie dead before I came: but he had first witnessed a good confession. On one telling him, 'You will soon be better,' he replied, 'I cannot be better; for I have the love of God in my heart. I am happy,—happy,—happy in his love!' Mr. Wilson, the vicar, after a little hesitation, consented that I should preach his funeral sermon: this I did to-day. The text he had chosen was, 'To you that believe he is precious.' Perhaps such a congregation had hardly been in Otley church before. Surely the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass!"

The loss of a revered and tender parent could not but be severely felt by an affectionate and pious child. Such bereavements, which break the earliest and most hallowed ties of nature, rend the heart with inexpressible distress. Yet even for the orphan there is sacred consolation in that promise, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." In the case of Miss Ritchie it was abundantly fulfilled. She had felt the consolation derived from Divine sympathy. She was favoured also with the sympathy of invaluable Christian friends. The following extract from a letter written to her by Lady Maxwell will afford evidence of this, as well as of the early date of Miss Ritchie's friendship with this eminent and truly pious lady:—

"*Edinburgh, April,* 1780.

* * * * *

"Were it not a persuasion, that every thing which befalls the children of God is either by the express or permissive will of their heavenly Father, and as such is intended for their present and future good, I would regret, dear madam, the distress you have had in your family. Nature must feel on these occasions: unreproved, she may drop a tear for her own sorrows, and those of others, while the mind is kept in perfect peace and constant resignation to the Divine will. This you have proved, and, I am glad to hear, have also greatly profited by the rod. It is a high privilege 'to glorify God in the fires.' He has done much for you; and will, I hope, daily do more; and keep you constantly pressing on, sinking into all the depths of humble love, and rising to all the heights of Christian confidence. And, after all, it is but a small taste of Divine love we can bear here. While in the body our capacities are very limited, our attainments small, our life but in embryo. Blessed be God for the glorious prospect he has opened beyond the grave, when 'our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body!' We shall then know as we are known; we shall see God and live; we shall behold our victorious Redeemer. Animated with this blessed, this soul-elevating, prospect, with what holy indifference may we view all that the world calls great and good! How sweet the liberty those enjoy whose hearts are free, and disengaged from all below! If we have tasted of this liberty, how great the mercy! what thanks, what praise, are due! And how great our encouragement to press forward! With best wishes for your spiritual prosperity, believe me, dear madam, in the best of bonds,

"Your affectionate friend,

"D. MAXWELL."

The following expressions of the early, tender, and affectionate regard of a no less valuable and still surviving friend, cannot be perused without interest and instruction:—

"*Wotton-under-Edge, April*, 1781.

"MY BELOVED FRIEND,—Before I received your letter, my mind was brought into the perfect calm of resignation. I felt willing to return the valued loan I had received to Him who gave it; and it seemed to me, that without pain I could have heard the account of your departure. I was willing, if it was your Father's will, we should meet no more on earth. And this view reconciled me to it; namely, a beholding Him as the universal Spirit, filling and pervading all things, and working in each that which was effectual to the edification of the whole. I saw it was well fitting that he should act by and in what means he saw good; that his children had a stable rejoicing in their propriety in him. Here was their common treasure; their union with each other was indissoluble, because in Him: therefore, death parted not, but prepared a better meeting-place, or, at least, ushered into it. I had mourned to lose you here, on account of the help I looked for through you ; and which I could not have, should you be removed from this world. But I saw, that God could minister that help by any medium, though I saw none so likely. And should I choose the cup I would drink out of? Or would it not be enough, if the water of life was given me? But your letter, my beloved friend, seems to encourage my hope of your longer stay; a stay truly desirable, because the choice of indulgent Wisdom.

" Mr. Wesley writes me word, that he wishes you to husband the little strength you have, more than you do. The Lord direct you in all things. Yours, in closest bond,

" ELIZABETH M. MORGAN."

This accomplished lady has been long better known by her matrimonial than by her parental name. She surrendered that of MORGAN on her marriage with ELI BATES, Esquire, a gentleman well known in the literary and philosophic world: and it is a pleasing though somewhat singular fact, that, amidst all the mutabilities of this changeful scene, the friendship, commenced thus early, continued unabated till the close of life. That it was a source of mutual pleasure and improvement, the progress of the present work will show.

Through long and indispensable attention to the duties of filial piety and affection, Miss Ritchie's complaints had again assumed so alarming an appearance, that her medical attendants considered her removal to the Hot Wells at Bristol, as a step absolutely necessary to be taken immediately. In company with two friends, she therefore set out as soon as possible after the funeral of her father; and making a tour through Leeds, Sheffield, Derby, Birmingham, Worcester, and Stroud, (at all which places she was welcomed by kind friends,) she came at length to Bristol, and thence to the Hot Wells, where she fixed her residence at the Rock-house. Here she found every thing to her mind; having much opportunity for retirement, which was so congenial to her devout spirit, and deriving from the use of the waters considerable benefit to her health. The recollection of the scenes through which she had passed softened but did not overwhelm her spirits, which had been severely agitated and affected by her recent loss. The sorrowful circumstances, under which she found herself obliged to leave her widowed parent, were, however, painfully remembered: and in May, she thus writes to a friend: "Yesterday, I found much nearness to my dear mother: surely I never knew before how much I loved her. Lord bless her, and keep her from being overcharged with sorrow, either on my dear father's account, or on my own! I felt much affection toward him, and his memory seemed afresh endeared to me."

How interesting are those sympathies which link spirits to each other, and which neither time, nor death, nor distance, can dissolve! Surely those whom bonds so strong and so tender have united on earth, shall recognize, and love, and rejoice in holy association with each other throughout eternity.

After an absence of eight months, during which time she visited many places, and formed new and valuable connections, she returned to Otley, still infirm in health, but prospering in those higher interests which are exempt from dissolution and decay. Shortly after her return she says, "My soul has been filled with gratitude to God, on thinking of the love he has manifested toward me. I feel him near to defend, comfort, and sustain. Lord, increase my faith, and make me more deeply spiritual!"

February 2nd, 1784, she writes:—"I bless God, that I ever breathed the vital air, and was created capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying him. To him I surrender myself unreservedly, to do with and for me as seems best to himself. I was yesterday filled with thankfulness, while reading my former journal, to feel the difference in my present experience from what it was at that time. Then I groaned beneath the remains of the carnal mind. Pride, self-will, and unbelief, often interrupted my peace: now it flows as a river; my Lord has gained a victory over one of the most rebellious hearts that ever felt his grace. To his name be all the glory!

"March, 1785.—A review of past mercies

fills me with thankfulness. I am an unprofitable servant; but the love of my adorable Lord is without bottom or shore. To the glory of his name, I am still saved. My weakness is inexpressible: so also is my Saviour's love. I walk in blessed liberty; the kingdom of heaven is opened in my heart; and, in the midst of a thousand snares, and multiplied suggestions from the adversary, I am kept by the mighty power of God, and feel a clear evidence that Jesus saves to the uttermost."

In a letter to a friend she thus writes:—

"Let our eye of faith 'behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;' who, when he had paid our dreadful debt, 'entered into the heavens, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' If we had more faith, we should have more communion with our blessed Lord in his mediatorial office; and, by beholding Him as praying to the Father to send the promised Comforter, how would our expectations of receiving more abundant power from on high be increased! We should not conceive of the Father as unwilling to bless us; but we should see the adorable Saviour, by his intercession, obtaining for us all that fulness of the Spirit which the believer is capable of receiving; and our souls would feel the ripening influences of the uncreated Sun, and by grace be fully prepared for glory."

In the enjoyment of this deep and abiding peace with God, through Jesus Christ, whom she felt to be her "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," she perseveringly pursued that upward path which leads to higher knowledge, and increasing holiness.

CHAPTER III.

"From all its emanations, the sun itself receives no advantage but the honour of doing benefits; so doth the almighty Father of all his creatures: he sends forth his blessings upon us, that we, by using them aright, should make ourselves capable of greater."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

AFTER the decease of her beloved father, and the partial restoration of her health, a new and unpremeditated sphere of duty seemed to be opened to the subject of these memoirs; and this portion of her life may be said to constitute a second period in her history. Favoured in no common measure with the personal experience of the Holy Spirit's operations on the heart, she was peculiarly prepared for usefulness, in the instruction of the ignorant, in ministering consolation to the mourner, in teaching the way of faith more perfectly, or in enkindling to a brighter and a purer lustre, in the hearts of others, the flame of love and zeal which burned with so much constancy and fervour in her own.

As by the grace of God she was thus qualified, so did his Providence appear to indicate, that an enlarged engagement in these exercises was her special call. Her intimacy with the venerable Wesley, and consequent introduction to the extensive circle of his friends, procured for her unusual facilities, and gave proportionable sanction to her efforts in her Master's cause. From the present period, therefore, to the era of her marriage, she was chiefly occupied in visiting, at the solicitations of her large connections, their several societies and neighbourhoods, for purposes of spiritual improvement; nor was she less acceptable in the domestic circle, where she diffused an animating pleasure, by her amiable and gentle manners, and by her cheerful and intelligent conversation.

The detail of these movements constitutes the principal material of her journal through various subsequent years; connecting also the most gratifying statements as to her stability and progress in the inward life of grace. Upon both these subjects, her letters to her venerable correspondent likewise speak at large. Her spiritual prosperity may be inferred from the communication following:—

"*Otley, August* 15*th*, 1782.

"Rev. and Dear Sir:—Glory be to my Lord! he still holds my soul in second life, and gives me to feel that my treasure and my heart are in heaven. My soul enjoys sweet communion with the holy Trinity, and is deeply humbled on account of its own unworthiness. But, blessed be my adorable Saviour, I see, by faith, whence all my blessings flow: they are all conveyed to me through his blood.

"How good is our God! Mercies on every hand close me round, and command my liveliest gratitude. I rejoice in the hope, ere long, of praising my Saviour in nobler strains above; for I am not more dissatisfied with any thing than my power to bring glory to his name. My capacity to comprehend the love of God seems so limited, and my spirit so imprisoned, while confined in a tenement of clay, that I almost long for enlargement; when my freed soul shall, with unutterable delight, range the illimitable plains of Jehovah's kingdom, converse with kindred angels, and, as a separate spirit, adore and love. But still, let my Father's will be done! I would not wish to burst the shell, and spring to life, a moment sooner than infinite Wisdom sees good. His will is my rest; may I improve my added moments as he means I should! and then life lengthened will be glory increased. You ask, whether I am fully employed for a good Master? When I would attempt to answer, my spirit sinks into confusion at his adorable feet, conscious how little I am capable of doing for him. Thus far, however, I can say, In all I do his glory is my aim; and so graciously does he deal with me, that, when I am called to serve with Martha's hands, I feel a Mary's heart; and, when engaged more immediately in his blessed service, it is my delight. I remain, Rev. and dear sir, your unworthy child, E. RITCHIE."

In 1784, and 1786, Mr. Wesley thus writes:

"I have often been musing upon this,—why the generality of Christians, even those who really are such, are less zealous and less active for God when they are middle-aged, than they were when young. May we not draw an answer to this question from that declaration of our Lord, (no less than eight times repeated by the evangelists,) 'To him that hath,' (uses what he hath,) 'shall be given; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away that he hath?' A measure of zeal and activity is given to every one, when he finds peace with God. If he earnestly and diligently uses these talents, they will be increased; but if he ceases (yea, intermits) to do good, he insensibly loses both the will and the power. So that there is no possible way to retain those gifts but to use them to the uttermost. Let this declension never take place in my dear friend! Never abate any thing of your diligence in doing good. Sometimes, indeed, the feeble body sinks under you: but when you do all you can, you do enough. Yours, J. WESLEY."

"It is doubtless the will of our Lord, that we should be guided by our reason, as far as it can go. But in *many* cases it gives us very little light, and in *others* none at all. In *all* cases it cannot guide us right, but in subordination to the unction of the Holy One. So that in all our ways we are to acknowledge him, and he will direct our paths.

"I do not remember to have heard or read any thing like my own experience. Almost ever since I can remember, I have been led in a peculiar way. I go on in an even line, being very little raised at one time, or depressed at another. Count Zinzendorf observes, 'There are three different ways wherein it pleases God to lead his people. Some are guided, almost in every instance, by apposite texts of Scripture; others see a clear and plain reason for every thing they are to do; and yet others are led, not so much by Scripture and reason, as by particular impressions.' I am very rarely led by impressions, but generally by reason and Scripture: I *see* abundantly more than I *feel*. I want to feel more love and zeal for God. My very dear friend, adieu!

"J. WESLEY."

By her peculiar and extended sphere of duty, she became associated in her progress with a more than usual number of sensible and pious persons; in intercourse with whom this season of her life was chiefly passed. While, therefore, notices of these distinguished individuals are essentially connected with her story, they form a source of new and varied interest, alike instructive and agreeable; and if by friendships judgment may be formed of character, an inference highly honourable to Miss Ritchie must in this respect be drawn.

By Miss Bosanquet she had been kindly noticed very early in her Christian course, and has often mentioned her pleasant and profitable visits to Cross-Hall. Time matured their acquaintance into intimacy; and on the marriage of this lady to the pious and devoted Mr. Fletcher, vicar of Madeley,—a name associated with whatever in religion is sublime, or elevated, or intense, or holy,—she was privileged with this invaluable accession to the number of her friends. Such friendships are, indeed, responsibilities; they are privileges of no common value; the influence of spirits of this lofty order, acting upon every kindred sympathy, possesses a transforming power. Stimulated by the admiration of exalted excellence, a holy emulation animates the mind; the oracles of wisdom, emanating from the voice of love, engage the heart's affections; and unconstrained and frequent intercourse with living models of superior intellect and goodness, while it refreshes and expands the soul, becomes the means of propagating, by reflection, the ardours of a glowing piety, the power of exemplary virtue, and the light of heavenly truth.

Miss Ritchie was most thankfully sensible of the advantages which she in this respect enjoyed, and in the present instance knew how to prize her privilege. Mr. Fletcher she regarded with peculiar veneration, and ever cherished an unabated and affectionate esteem for his inestimable wife.

Being present as a favoured guest on the occasion of their nuptials, she has left an interesting record of the solemnities of that important day. She writes: "November 12th, 1781. I can truly say, I have been at one Christian wedding; Jesus was invited, and he was at our Cana. We reached Cross-Hall before family prayer. Mr. Fletcher was dressed in his canonicals; and, after giving out one of Mr. Charles Wesley's marriage-hymns, he read the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses of the 19th chapter of Revelations, and spoke from them in such a manner as greatly tended to spiritualize the solemnities of the day. On our way to the church, which was nearly two miles distant, (Batley,) he spoke of the mystery couched under marriage, namely, the union between Christ and the church. They were married in the face of the congregation, the doors were thrown open, and every one came in that would. We then returned home, and spent a considerable time in singing and prayer with their own family. Nearly twenty friends were present. The time after dinner, (which was a spiritual meal as well as a natural one,) was chiefly spent in prayer and conversation. Mr. Valton preached in the evening from these most suitable words: 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?' There seemed, after preaching, to be a pleasing contest among us, by whom the largest debt of praise was due. Mr. Fletcher, in the course of conversation some days afterward, said, 'Five-and-twenty years ago, when I first saw my dear wife, I thought if I ever married she would be the person of my choice; but her

L of C.

large fortune was in the way, she was too rich for me, and I therefore strove to banish every thought of the kind.' "

The piety and holiness of this devoted minister of Christ awakened in Miss R.'s mind no common interest; her sympathies were in accordance with the universal feeling of regard and admiration excited by his lofty, spiritual, and almost seraphic character. The intercourse, although occasional, which she enjoyed with so sublime a spirit, enkindled in her mind more fervent aspirations after high attainments, and exhibited to her imitation a living model of the zeal, and love, and meekness, and humility, that constitute the mind of Christ.

In her journal, June 26th, 1784, Miss Ritchie writes:—"On Saturday we came to Leeds, where my spirit was much refreshed by the sight of my dear old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher. Mr. Fletcher preached on Sunday morning, and Mr. Wesley in the evening: they were both solemn and animating occasions.

"July 16th.—Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher visited Otley, I was truly blessed and edified by their society. Our house was full of company, and my health very indifferent: but the Lord does all things well; he gives me entire resignation to his will."

This was probably the last time she enjoyed the privilege of intercourse with her distinguished friend. In August of the following year, her journal states,—"I have received a few lines from Mrs. Crosby, who mentions that a report has reached Leeds of the death of Mr. Fletcher, which she hopes is not correct, and requests my prayers in behalf of dear Mrs. Fletcher. If I may judge from my own feelings, it is but too true. I went to the Lord, but could only pray for her and the Church. My spirit felt tender sympathy with my dear afflicted friend; but the Lord can support her, and raise up an Elisha to fill the place, and catch the mantle of our translated Elijah. Last night confirmed the doleful truth:—that bright and shining light no longer illumines our hemisphere; he is gone to that glory which had so powerfully transformed his spirit into the image of his blessed Master. When I found it really was so, with David 'I became dumb: I opened not my mouth, because God had done it.' Infinite wisdom cannot err; but when I think of what my dear friend will feel, of the Church's and of my own loss, and also of my small improvement of the invaluable blessing of such a Christian friend, as well as of the grief it will occasion to dear Mr. Wesley, my tears freely flow. I think my Lord will not reprove my sorrow; it draws me upward; I feel a new attraction toward heaven. While memory recalls the form of the departed; his words, his actions, his heavenly looks, all seem to say, 'Follow me, as I have followed Christ; then shall you also behold that glory to which I have now attained.'

"I wrote, as well as I could, to my dear afflicted friend, and offered her any assistance it might be in my power to render.—Lord, make me more fully ready for thine appearing! My spirit, I am deeply sensible, may take a much brighter polish; and thereby, as a purer mirror, reflect the glory of my Lord to all eternity.

"September 9th.—This morning's post brought me a letter from dear Mrs. Fletcher; wherein she says, 'God orders all. The great lesson I want to learn, is perfect resignation; which he has taken the most effectual means to teach me, and I trust it will answer his wise design.'"

How animating are the discoveries made by Divine revelation! Truly, Christians sorrow not as those without hope. With what solemn and elevated pleasure have these devotedly attached friends renewed their intercourse in that world, where

"Glorified spirits by sight
Converse in their holy abode,
As stars in the firmament bright,
And pure as the angels of God!"

The following letter from Mr. Charles Wesley to Mrs. Fletcher was found among Mrs. Mortimer's papers. It is too interesting in all its connections to require any apology for its introduction here. It affords a beautiful specimen of the venerable writer's powers in extemporaneous composition, as well as a sublime example of sacramental devotion, faith, and charity.

"*Marybone, May 24th,* 1785.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—If you love Mr. Fletcher, you should love the poor Methodists; for to their prayers you owe him, and he you. I found words, and the people faith, while we heard, at Bristol, that our friend was just departing. After the sacrament we sung the following hymn, which you have the best right to:—

A PRAYER,

For the Rev. John Fletcher, June 30, 1776

JESUS, thy feeble servant see;
Sick is the man beloved by thee;
Thy name to magnify,
To spread thy Gospel truths again,
His precious soul in life detain,
Nor suffer him to die.

The fervent prayer thou oft hast heard,
Thy mighty arm in mercy bared,
Thy wonder-working power
Appear'd in all thy people's sight,
And stopp'd the spirit in its flight,
And bade the grave restore.

In faith we ask a fresh reprieve;
Frequent in deaths, he still shall live,
If thou pronounce the word;
Shall spend for thee his strength renew'd,
Witness of thy all-cleansing blood,
Forerunner of his Lord.

The Spirit that raised thee from the dead,
Be in its quick'ning virtue shed
His mortal flesh to raise;
To consecrate thy human shrine,
And fill with energy Divine
The minister of grace.

Body and soul at once revive;
The prayer of faith, in which we strive,
So shall we all proclaim,
According to thy gracious will,
Omnipotent the sick to heal,
In every age the same.

"Since his resurrection you have been commanded to give him something to eat; and from none but you would he receive it; such was his obstinacy, till love overcame it. You have been the instrument of adding some years to his valuable life. Remember, for the short time that I shall want your prayers, my dear friend, your old faithful servant,

"C. WESLEY."

To Mr. Fletcher, on the same sheet, he adds:—

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—You ought to have paid the last office, instead of me, to our most venerable archbishop at Shoreham.* On Sunday I deposited the sacred ashes in his partner's grave, and preached twice. His death was such as his life promised: for many years he breathed the pure spirit of love. The survivor who follows him nearest is *longo proximus intervallo*.

"A fortnight ago I preached the condemned sermon to above twenty criminals. Every one of them, I have good grounds to believe, died penitent. Twenty more must die next week.

"Sally presents her duty and love: the rest join. Direct to me in Marybone, and help me to depart in peace."

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* Their common friend and revered counsellor, the Rev. Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham.

A character of simple and ingenuous confidence in God appears in the ensuing observations of Miss Ritchie, which occur under the date of March, 1786:—"My time has lately been fully employed; and though at some seasons I have been closely tried, yet the Lord has graciously screened me from the heat of the day; and I have found constant repose in him. While asking direction from above, respecting my providential course, that often-applied word was given me, 'I will guide thee by mine eye.' Immediately I thought, How needful is it that my eye should ever meet the eye of God, in order that I may feel its blessed guidance! Once I watched a creature's eye; and had so far gained a power to read its language, that, by the turn of Mrs. H.'s eye, I knew her will, better than some who had heard her words. Thus will I watch my Lord's eye. His providence shall point out my way, and his Spirit guide me, according to that sacred rule, his holy word."

Shortly after this, her path was opened to visit her bereaved friend, Mrs. Fletcher. Meeting at Birmingham with Mr. Wesley, he invited her to accompany him to Madeley. She thankfully embraced the opportunity; and thus records her feelings on her arrival at the vicarage:—"My mind was solemnly affected when I entered the house: but more so when I saw my dear afflicted friend. The Lord sanctified our meeting, and made it a profitable season. Mr. Wesley preached on Sunday, from the commencement of Revelations xiv; and so delineated the character of the dear departed saint, as greatly to affect me, and many others; whose weeping eyes and sympathizing looks showed how greatly they revered and loved the memory of their departed pastor."

March 31st, 1786, Miss Ritchie records the following circumstance:—"This day I received a letter from a gentleman I had seen at Birmingham, who writes to me on the subject of marriage. He is a sensible good man, and, as to outward things, much beyond what I have any right to expect. He was converted to God in the same year that I was; and has been steady from that time to the present. He is gunsmith to his majesty; is in very affluent circumstances; and freely tells me he wants me to help him to live to God. After laying the matter before the Lord in prayer, I saw it my duty to decline his offer. It is true, that one talent, of which I often now feel the want, would be put into my hands; but my time would not be all at liberty for the Lord's service. Nor do I feel that particular conviction from God, without which I cannot act in an affair of this kind. What my Lord may call me to in future, I know not: I would move at his beck, as the leaf before the wind; but, at present, I have no intimation that this is his will concerning me. I do not mean, that I expect a particular revelation to be made to me on the subject; (although this, I believe, is sometimes given;) but I think, that, whenever I am called to change my situation, it will plainly appear to my understanding, that by such a change I shall be likely to become more holy and more useful. Then my will would choose, and my affections embrace, it as the will of God. I see time to be such a moment, that nothing appears worth a thought that will not render me capable of a fuller enjoyment of him. I wrote to Mr. M. a civil, but full refusal, as I think it very wrong to keep a person in suspense on any such occasions. It is a token of respect which merits all the regard that can consistently be shown."

Less than prophetic prescience might, perhaps, discover, that perseverance in this suit would win the prize at length.

After spending some time in profitable intercourse with her friend, Miss Ritchie accepted an invitation to visit Ireland; on which occasion she says, "So plainly did the cloud move toward Dublin, that I never took a journey in my life with stronger assurance of my being in the very way wherein the Lord would have me to go." She travelled through North Wales; and says, "Part of this country is beautifully pleasant. The woods, mountains, valleys, and winding rivers, that diversify the scene, have afforded me matter of praise; and have drawn out my heart in adoration of the great Origin of beauty. Rural scenery always does me good; and, although this has been, upon the whole, a day of trial, yet I have seen God in all things, and have ascended from earth to heaven."

Miss Ritchie was affectionately received by her friends in Dublin; and, while among them, was actively employed in spiritual engagements, from which they, as well as herself, appear to have derived much benefit. "I am often," she says, "greatly straitened for time; my engagements multiply so fast, as to be almost too much for my strength; but the Lord enables me to live under the shadow of his wing, and keeps me in constant peace." After a visit of three months, she returned, expressing great thankfulness to God, and also to her friends, for their hospitality and kindness.

She again spent some time at Madeley; and, while there, was seriously attacked with fever, the probable result of great exertions, which had too much excited both her physical and mental powers. By Mrs. Fletcher's kind attentions, and the blessing of her heavenly Father, she at length so far recovered as to be able to return to Otley; and, on reaching home, observes, "This journey has been marked with mercies. By the blessing of my Saviour, and the kindness of my friends, I am now restored nearly to my usual health."

To a friend she writes, shortly afterward, "O my dear friend! dying views are just views. We see the shadows of time in a true point of light, when eternity is about to open upon us. May you and I improve the frequent calls given us by infinite Love; and may every signal that we shall shortly leave this vain world, make us abundantly more like those who seek a country out of sight!"

Believing that "to lead a pilgrim's life" was, at this time, her providential call, as soon as health and circumstances permitted, she resumed her travels; and at Hull, Stockport, Manchester, and other places, visited her numerous friends, exerting every where a holy influence, and seeking to promote the spiritual and everlasting interests of those whose hospitality and friendship she so largely shared. Yet while occupying this extensive sphere, she often sighed for her beloved retirement, and says, "I resignedly long for more leisure. I never remember to have seen so many sick people as at Hull. Visiting these, associating with my friends, and attending the means of grace, leave me less time in private than I could wish. But all is right that my Lord permits. I would not choose even my own spiritual employments: to fall in with the order of God, is more my business than any thing else."

Of these engagements Miss Ritchie writes as follows:—

"*Otley, November* 11*th*, 1782.

"Will my Rev. and dear father excuse my seeming negligence? While I was from home, the multiplicity of my engagements among the people, wherever I went, left me no time for writing; but, now that I am again settled in my peaceful dwelling, I will endeavour to give a little account of the many mercies bestowed on me and others during my late journey.

"I found, as you observed, at Liverpool, a new scene opened to me. For some years my lot has not been cast so much among worldly people as at that place: but, blessed be God, he kept me separate in spirit from those that knew him not! Never did I feel more love and pity for those who were entangled in the allurements of this vain world; or more thankfulness to that God whose gracious love had set my spirit free. As to our own people there, they are very friendly and kind.

"At Macclesfield I found a happy, lively people; and was greatly refreshed among them. I spent a few days with our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Mayer, at Portwood, where I was much humbled and richly comforted. The Stockport society love the whole truth; but, as yet, few of them enjoy the full liberty of the Gospel. At Bolton, I had a good time: the Lord blessed me in my own soul, and gave his blessing to the people.

"O that the love which is the fulfilling of the law may every where prevail! I rejoice in the prosperity of others; and, blessed be God, I daily rejoice in Him whose love is without measure or end. Never was my spirit more disengaged from all beneath; and though, at times, I deeply feel how much more fully I might have improved all my mercies, yet I am kept from discouragement by the reviving presence of my Lord, who by his Spirit points out and discovers this to me, with inexpressible tenderness. I see such wisdom, such love in all his dealings with me, as sinks me into the dust, and fills my heart with grateful praise.

"May all blessings be poured from on high upon my dear and much-loved father! I am, my dear sir, your truly affectionate, though unworthy child,

"E. Ritchie."

The course of Christian activity in which Miss Ritchie moved, at this time, must be regarded as a special designation of Divine Providence. Talents for peculiar usefulness had been committed to her; and facilities for the employment of them were afforded by the economy of that religious body with which she was in intimate connection; as well as by the many influential friendships which, in various quarters, she had formed. While, therefore, what appeared to be *her* line of duty is not strictly exemplary, yet her portrait could not be correctly drawn without adverting to this more conspicuous season of her eminently useful life: nor can the characters with whom she was associated pass in review before the mind, without exciting thoughts of prayerful and affecting interest. They were orbs of light, which even yet reflect a hallowed and benign effulgence on the Church. Placed, by peculiar circumstances, in a sphere which was enlarged beyond the pale of ordinary Christian duty; and participating largely of that rich spiritual influence which attends revivals of religion in their earliest periods; they seemed to breathe an atmosphere more subtle, penetrating, and elastic, than that inhaled by persons who live less in commerce with unearthly things. Spirits of this order the Holy Ghost prepares and disciplines for special purposes; for seasons whose emergency the usual tone of zealous feeling is too low to reach; for ministries, like that entrusted to the prophet, which demand the touch of fire; for specimens of that intense vitality which may be communicated by the quickening Spirit, to the soul once dead in trespasses and sins. Such, realizing the idea in the ardent mind of the apostle,* run a shining course; and, stimulating others, by their holy zeal as well as blameless piety, to imitate their bright career, seem designated to hold forth the word of life, and to reflect a holy splendour on the Church and on the world.

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* Phil. ii. 15, 16. That St. Paul, who so often illustrates his subjects by allusion to the Grecian games, has here a reference to the foot-race, run with lighted torches, appears highly probable.

"The feast of the Panathenæa was celebrated at Athens, in honour of Minerva. On the morning of the first day a race was run on foot, in which each of the runners carried a lighted torch in his hand, which they exchanged continually, without interrupting the race. The first that came to the goal without having put out his torch carried the prize."—ROLLIN'S *Ancient History.*

"On the first day there was a race with torches, wherein first footmen, and afterward horsemen, contended."—POTTER'S *Grecian Antiquities.*

The great religious revival of the last century produced in Britain no ordinary number of these fervent, hallowed, and devoted spirits, who, entering on the course with an unflinching courage, bore aloft the torch of truth, and held it with a cautious, steadfast, persevering hand. Communicating and receiving light, they ran their race with patience, and presented at the goal the unextinguished tokens of their victory. Many eyes were fixed upon them in their progress. A train of mild and mellow splendour tracks the path through which they passed. *Their* peculiar post of duty, in the Master's service, *all* his followers are not called to fill; yet each may emulate the holy vigour of their faith, and learn, from their example, the art of living, not for selfish objects merely, but for the glory of their Saviour, and the benefit of all to whom their influence shall extend.

In May, 1788, Mr. Wesley visited Yorkshire; and Miss Ritchie enjoyed many opportunities of intercourse with her venerable friend. After his departure, the following observations occur in her journal:—

"Mr. Wesley left us early this morning, and pursued his way to Scotland. I felt much thankfulness for the many gracious opportunities afforded me. O that I may learn better to improve what my God, in his love bestows! My many interviews with my dear father, at this time, have put a fresh edge on the desire of my spirit after that communion with my Lord, which will make me what he would have me to be.

"Mr. Wesley has been advising me to embrace some providential openings to visit our friends in London; and I feel much inclined to do so, from a fear that my dear father should not be lent to us much longer. I should esteem it a favour to spend a winter in London while he lives; and therefore mean, with my Lord's leave, to go in a few weeks."

In the course of the same month Miss Ritchie wrote as follows to Mr. Wesley, from Parkgate:—

"*May* 28*th*, 1788.

"REV. SIR,—How am I indebted to the Lord for the kind concern you show for my welfare! Your last letter caused much thankfulness. If I may judge of my future by my present feelings, no situation in life will have any tendency to obliterate from my memory a due sense of the numerous and unmerited favours which, for many years, I have been receiving from you. Except I fall from grace, the gratitude which I now feel will be permanent; for I am ready to think, that in the eternal world my spirit will enjoy a peculiar union with those to whom the love of Jesus united me in sacred bonds while sojourning here below. Glory be to our God for such a friendship as eternity itself shall ripen! I can never sufficiently adore the riches of that grace which has so brought the powers of my mind under obedience to Christ, that other attachments I do not feel.

"I greatly praise the Lord for all that has happened to me of late; and now find the sweetness of living in the will of my heavenly Father. I am wholly the Lord's; and to him my spirit ever bows. The path wherein I shall most glorify God, is my deliberate choice; and whether this shall be by doing or by suffering his righteous will, I leave entirely in his hands. He keeps me in perfect peace, and gives me to drink of the water of life. I daily walk in the light of his countenance, and feel my God a satisfying portion. He saves me beyond all I can ask or think, and will continue to save to the very uttermost a soul that comes to him. All his dispensations are faithfulness and love. Many outward trials he has permitted me lately to meet with; but all are sanctified, so that my daily crosses only drive me nearer to him. This earth, I know, is not my home: I am a stranger and a sojourner here, as all my fathers were; but I seek a country out of sight, a city in the skies, whose builder and maker is God: and sometimes my faith so steadfastly beholds the glory that shall be revealed, that I am ready to say, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!' But still I rest resigned, and wait my Father's will, feeling that it is even good to be here.

"Help me all you can, dear sir, to improve the flying moments as they pass, and to redeem the present time.

"I am truly thankful that God inclined you to publish the Magazine. Your dear mother's letters are excellent indeed; and it would have been a pity if the public had not been favoured with them. I trust this work will be a blessing to thousands and tens of thousands. May the Lord reward you for all the unmerited favours bestowed on, reverend and dear sir,

"Yours, E. Ritchie."

Her purpose to visit the metropolis was shortly fulfilled.—"On the 10th of July," she writes, "I left my dear Otley friends, and went to Kirkstall Forge, in my way to London. While preparing for this journey I have felt peculiar rest and composure of spirit. When at prayer with the family, that word was given me, 'The very hairs of your head are numbered.' It inspired me with calm confidence in my Lord's preserving care; I was assured that they should have a farther fulfilment than merely in relation to the body, if I would but trust in him. I felt not only the will but the power to do so. Armed with my Saviour's might, I left my dear people; and once more, Abraham-like, followed my Lord into an unknown part of the vineyard. At Leeds I took sweet counsel with a friend; and on the 17th, at five o'clock in the morning, took coach for London, where, after a journey of mercies, I arrived about twelve the next day. I was kindly received by my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Peard Dickenson, and in the evening supped with Mr. Wesley. I soon felt myself quite at home. The situation is airy; and Mr. and Mrs. Dickenson seem just such friends as I need. We had a profitable time during the Conference. Prayer was heard and answered in behalf of our honoured father, who was divinely assisted in the performance of his arduous duties. In the public ordinances I drank freely of the water of life; and while I heard the truth, I felt it in my heart.

"August 10th.—Mr. Wesley is gone to visit the societies in Wales. Since then, one and another of our friends, who came to the Conference, have left us; but He in whom the whole are joined is still here. My spirit lives by faith in Christ, and feels him near to save.

"August 17th.—I called on Miss Thornton,* and was much edified by her conversation. She is one of those few who walk closely with God. I feel much union of spirit with her; and long to learn of her, and of all who pursue the same most excellent course, how to gain my calling's glorious hope. I went, on the 19th, with Mr. and Mrs. Dickenson, to Deptford, where we spent two very profitable days, at Mr. Dornford's.

"I have passed a fortnight with my dear friends, Mrs. Ford and Miss Owen, at Camberwell. I felt myself utterly unworthy of the love and kindness shown to me. It was for thy sake, O Lord!

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* The intimate friend of Mr. Fletcher.

"Last week I spent a little time with Mrs. Collinson.* My soul has fed on heavenly manna, while we have conversed, and read, and prayed together. Her sweet simplicity of spirit did me good. We strove to help each other to draw nearer to our centre; and, forgetting things behind, to take a stronger hold on Israel's strength. Surely I am more than others indebted to my Lord, in being favoured with the personal knowledge of so many of the excellent of the earth."

Miss Ritchie's introduction to these and other interesting and influential Christian friends in the metropolis and its vicinity, appears to have afforded her both pleasure and improvement. They were the friends of Mr. Wesley, and the trophies of his generous and unwearied labours in his Master's cause. Enjoying in an especial manner, the advantage of his personal instructions, a proportionate conformity in views and principles was but the natural result. She, who had studied so observantly the same model, felt, therefore, peculiar sympathy of spirit with her venerable father's chosen friends. In this early intercourse was also laid the basis of those friendships which were to constitute the social interests of succeeding years. The old disciples, it is true, had generally "departed from the shadows of this world, and received their glorious garments from the Lord," before her residence was fixed in London. But the younger members of their families, whose incipient piety she had hailed with smiles of kind encouragement, and whom she had cheered onward by her wise and pious counsels, remained to share the benefit of her matured experience, and the privilege and pleasure of her valuable friendship, through a course of years. There are periods in the progress of life to which the mind adverts with feelings of no common interest. Reminiscences, connected with the dawning light and life of the immortal spirit, are at once the most affecting, solemn, and delightful, that the treasured stores of memory can supply.

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* The wife of Mr. John Collinson, of Southwark. This lady was one of the early seals to the Wesleyan ministry, at Newcastle, and an intimate friend of Mr. Wesley.

The following extract from a letter written during this visit, will show what she regarded as defective in some of her London friends :—

"*February* 20*th,* 1789.

* * * * *

"Never did I see true Christian simplicity more beautiful than of late. Let us cultivate it both toward God and our brethren. I am here cast, at times, among some excellent people, who have really what I think I may venture to call first-rate understandings, well improved by education and proper company; and with a considerable degree of piety; but for want of more of this Christian grace, others are not benefited by them as they ought to be. A few of these characters are really aiming to attain a simple filial spirit; but, ah, my friend! what will it cost to break them down? Though I greatly admire such persons, and must own that I love their company; yet I am often thankful for being cast in a different mould; my natural freedom, with all its consequences, is less repugnant to the life of faith, than all their unprofitable reasonings."

To the same friend she again writes:—

"I hope you have had a good season at P. G. The God of the hills is also the God of the valleys. What we need, in order to make every place a Bethel, is a sense of our wants, and of his willingness to supply them out of the riches of his glory, by Christ Jesus. I long, my dear sister, for you to lay all your hinderances at the Saviour's feet; and to let him fully save you from your sins. I know that your weakness of body exposes you to many painful feelings; but do not those feelings also loudly call you to make ready for the Bridegroom? Yes, your heart feels they do; come, then, to the open fountain, and wash away your remaining impurities. Faith brings that degree of power which you want. The Lord help you to take hold on Divine strength! While you are reading these lines, cast your soul on the promise, 'He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'"

The winter of the following year was passed in London. In May and June, 1790, Miss Ritchie visited Newcastle, where, she says, "I spent some time with Miss Dale,* and found sweet fellowship of spirit with her, and freedom among the people, although, at first, I thought them rather shy and distant."

The following portion of a letter, written from this place to her friend, Mrs. T—n, will show the habitual spirituality of her mind:—

"*Newcastle-upon-Tyne, July* 12*th*, 1790.

* * * * *

"A thousand things conspire to proclaim, 'This is not our home.' My spirit deeply feels the solemn truth, and longs to improve the flying moments in getting fully ready for enlargement; ready for that blessed day which shall unite the scattered members of our Lord's mystical body in that eternal kingdom which faith opens to our view. Nothing else seems worth a thought. Lord, help me to live for this alone! Help me, my dear friend, to get more of the spirit of the country to which I am hastening! Let us live looking for our Lord, that, whenever the Bridegroom cometh, we may go forth with joy to meet him.

"The sweet retirement, blessed public and private ordinances, social interviews, &c, with which I have been favoured here, have been truly profitable to me. Dear Miss Dale, whom I believe you know, is a blessed follower of our Lord. She is a person of one business. We are striving to help each other to sink into the life of humble love, that we may rise into the riches of our Saviour's grace; and he condescends to smile upon us. We want to feel all sensible objects entirely subservient to a life of faith; and often unitedly praise Him, who by his own blood has opened for us a way into the holiest. We would live, gathering up all our powers into Him, who is the repairer of our nature's breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in."

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* Sister to Mrs. Collinson, previously named, one of Mr. Wesley's personal friends, and for many years an eminently devoted Christian.

To the same friend she again writes from

"*Kirkstall Forge*, *Sept.* 14*th*, 1790.

"My dear Mrs. T—n's truly Christian letter breathed a spirit which at once drew out my heart in prayer for her and for myself. O that we may all so follow the light as it shines, that, however our outward paths may differ, we may continually abide in the secret place of his presence, who is a hiding-place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest, to all who take refuge in him! Many thanks, my dear friend, for the kind instruction afforded me from your own past and present experience. I think with you, that the advantage of freedom from domestic cares, and, consequently, of liberty to choose our own employments, is no small favour; and, while enjoyed in the Divine order, is a talent from which our Lord designs that we should reap much benefit.

"I want larger views of our Saviour's love; thoughts of God more worthy of him. What cannot, what will not, he do, for the waiting, praying, believing soul? Let you and me try the faithfulness of our promise-keeping Jehovah, and we shall surely prove a salvation beyond our largest hopes. In some feeble manner I am striving to come forward. But the promised inheritance, in the kingdom of grace, so opens upon me, that I seem to have nothing, to know nothing, in respect to what lies before me. My heart is fixed; my spirit cleaves to its Centre; and to know more of that love 'which passeth knowledge,' is a desire that swallows up all others in my soul."

In November following, Miss Ritchie again arrived in London, and had the satisfaction of once more meeting her revered friend Mr. Wesley, at whose pressing invitation she became an inmate at the chapel-house. Her friend, Miss Roe (now married to the Rev. James Rogers) resided there; but was in too infirm a state of health to occupy her usual place in the domestic circle. At the call of friendship, therefore, she consented, for a while, to undertake her charge, and says, "Believing it to be my providential path, I entered on my new engagement, and found sufficient business on my hands. The preacher who had usually read to Mr. Wesley being absent, he said to me, 'Betsey, you must be eyes to the blind:' I therefore rose with pleasure about half-past five o'clock, and generally read to him from six till breakfast time. Sometimes he would converse freely, and say, 'How good is the Lord to bring you to me when I want you most! I should wish you to be with me in my dying moments: I would have you to close my eyes.' When the fulness of my heart did not prevent reply, I have said, 'This, my dear sir, I would willingly do; but you live such a flying life, I do not well see how it is to be accomplished.' He would close the conversation by adding, 'Our God does all things well; we will leave it in his hands.' During the two months I passed under his roof, which proved to be the last he spent on earth, I derived much pleasure from his conversation. His spirit seemed all love; he breathed the air of paradise, adverting often to the state of separate spirits. 'Can we suppose,' he would observe, 'that this active mind, which animates and moves the dull matter with which it is clogged, will be less active when set free? Surely no; it will be all activity. But what will be its employments? Who can tell?' I was greatly profited during this season. My hands were full; but I felt the light of the Divine approbation shining on my path, which rendered easy many painful things I met with. Indeed, I felt it quite a duty to let Mr. Wesley want no attention I could possibly pay him: I loved him with a grateful and affectionate regard, as given by God to be my guide, my spiritual father, and my dearest friend; and was truly thankful to be assured that those attentions were made comforts to him.

"With concern I saw, in February, 1791, that his strength declined much. He could not bear to continue meeting the classes, but desired me to read to him; for, notwithstanding his bodily weakness, his great mind could not be unemployed. On Thursday, the 17th, he came home from Lambeth, with a bad cold; but I did not then apprehend much danger. On the following Sunday he was unable to go on with his usual work. I began to fear the consequences, and felt a pleading spirit, crying: 'Lord, spare the shepherd for the people's sake!' My fears were nevertheless mixed with hope; and as no one else seemed to apprehend danger, I endeavoured to resist the fears that rose in my mind.

"On Monday he was something better; and, ever active to perform his work, Miss Wesley and I accompanied him to Twickenham. On Tuesday he preached in the City-Road chapel, from Galatians v, 5: and afterward gave out his favourite Psalm,

'I 'll praise my Maker while I 've breath.

"On Wednesday he was so much better as to go to Leatherhead. He returned as far as Mr. Wolfe's on Thursday, and on Friday reached home. To proceed here would only be to copy a narrative, written at the time by desire of Dr. Whitehead, which he read after preaching the funeral sermon."

The narrative here mentioned was not only read by Dr. Whitehead after preaching the funeral sermon, but also printed and circulated throughout the Connection, for the satisfaction of the preachers, and the numerous friends of the deceased. As it is now little known, and is not inserted entire, or with any reference to the writer, in the works of Mr. Wesley's biographers, an extract from the concluding part of it will here be interesting, not only from its connection with Miss Ritchie, but also on account of its venerable subject:—

"On Tuesday, March 1st, Mr. Wesley conversed with his friend Mr. Bradford upon affairs relating to the Connection. He was afterward much exhausted, and, while sitting in his chair, was observed to change for death. His voice failed, and we were obliged to lay him down on the bed, from which he rose no more. After lying still and sleeping a little, he said, 'Betsey, you, Mr. Bradford, and the rest, pray and praise.' We kneeled down, and truly our hearts were filled with a sense of the Divine presence; the room seemed to be filled with God. He afterward gave a few directions respecting his funeral and other temporal concerns; and then, as if he felt that he had done with all below, begged that we would again pray and praise. While Mr.

Broadbent was thus engaged, Mr. Wesley's fervour of spirit was visible to every one present. One thing we could not but remark, that when Mr. Broadbent was praying in a very emphatic manner, that if God were about to take away our father and our head to his eternal glory, he would continue and increase his blessing upon the doctrine and discipline which he had so long made his aged servant the means of propagating and establishing in the world; such a degree of fervour accompanied Mr. Wesley's loud 'Amen,' as was very expressive of his soul's being engaged in the answer of our petitions. On rising from our knees, he took Mr. Broadbent's hand, drew him near, and with the utmost placidness saluted him, and said, 'Farewell, farewell!' Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, Mr. Horton, and others, drew near the bed-side, and he took the same affectionate leave of them all. The next pleasing, awful scene was the great exertion he made in order to make Mr. Broadbent understand that he desired a sermon which he had written on the love of God should be scattered abroad, and given to every body. Something else he would have said, but, alas! his speech failed; and those lips which used to feed many, were no longer able to convey their accustomed sounds. Finding that we could not understand what he said, he paused a little, and then, with all his remaining strength, cried out, 'The best of all is, God is with us!'—and then, as if to assert the faithfulness of our promise-keeping Jehovah, and comfort the hearts of his weeping friends, lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words, 'God is with us!' Some time after, on our giving him something to wet his parched lips, he said, 'It will not do· we must take the consequence; never mind the poor carcass.' Some friends standing near his bed-side, whom he did not distinctly perceive, (his sight being nearly gone,) he said, 'Who are these?' Mr. Rogers said, 'Sir, we are come to rejoice with you: you are going to receive your crown.' 'It is the Lord's doing,' he replied, 'and marvellous in our eyes.' On being told that Mrs. Charles Wesley was come, he said, 'He giveth his servants rest.' He thanked her as he pressed her hand; and on our wetting his lips, said, 'We thank thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies: bless the Church and king; and grant us peace and truth for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' At another time he said: 'He causeth his servants to lie down in peace.' I replied, 'They lie down in peace indeed, who rest in our Redeemer's bosom. May the Lord help us to rest in him, and then to rest with you in glory!' —to which he answered, 'Amen.' Then, pausing a little, he exclaimed, 'The Lord is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge!' and again requested us to pray. Mr. Broadbent was once more the mouth of our full hearts; and though Mr. Wesley was greatly exhausted by these exertions, he appeared still more fervent in spirit. Several of his relations being present, Mr. Broadbent particularly thanked God for the honour he had conferred upon the family; and earnestly prayed, that the glory might never be tarnished, nor they want a man to minister before the Lord to the latest generations; at the end of which petition our dying father discovered such ardency of desire that the prayer might be answered, by repeating his 'Amen,' as greatly affected all present. These exertions were, however, too much for his feeble frame; and during most of the night following, although he was often heard attempting to repeat the Psalm before mentioned, he could only get out, 'I 'll praise, I 'll praise.'

"On Wednesday morning we found that the closing scene drew near. Mr. Bradford, his faithful friend and most affectionate son in the Gospel, prayed with him, and the last word he was heard to articulate was, 'Farewell!' A few minutes before ten, while Miss Wesley, Mr. Horton, Mr. Brackenbury, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, Dr. Whitehead, Mr. Broadbent, Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Bradford, and E. Ritchie, were kneeling around his bed; according to his often expressed desire, without a lingering groan, this man of God gathered up his feet in the presence of his brethren. We felt what is inexpressible: the ineffable sweetness that filled our hearts, as our beloved pastor, father, and friend, entered into his Master's joy, for a few moments blunted the edge of our painful feelings on this truly glorious yet melancholy occasion. As our dear aged father breathed his last, Mr. Bradford was inwardly saying, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and let this heir of glory enter in!' Mr. Rogers gave out,

> 'Waiting to receive thy spirit,
> Lo! the Saviour stands above,
> Shows the purchase of his merit,
> Reaches out the crown of love.'

One then said, 'Let us pray for the mantle of our Elijah;' on which, Mr. Rogers prayed in the spirit for the descent of the Holy Ghost on us, and on all who mourn the general loss which the Church militant sustains by the removal of our much-loved father to his great reward. Even so, Amen!

"E. Ritchie."

As a token of affectionate regard, Mr. Wesley bequeathed to Miss Ritchie his gold seal; which, a few years since, was unfortunately (with her watch) stolen from her side in a crowd. He also gave her his gold pin, and silver fruit-knife. These, as remembrances both of herself and him, she has left to two very dear friends, who know how to prize them as memorials of a friendship which they highly valued on earth, and hope to renew in eternity.

In the midst of many engagements, and under strongly excited feelings, Miss Ritchie was not insensible to the extreme solicitude of others on a subject so deeply interesting to the

Church at large, as well as to herself; and thus writes to Mrs. T——n, her kind friend at Camberwell:—

" *Chapel-house, March* 1*st*, 1791.

" Your tender sympathy and kindness, my dear madam, were a real blessing to me. My God will take your offered kindness to my dearest father, as done unto himself. At present, he hangs between life and death, but in all human probability will soon leave the dull body behind, and fly to the regions of unclouded day. I cannot tell you what my heart feels. The heavenly sweetness discoverable in his spirit, and the holy confidence in our great redeeming Lord, expressed by my beloved father, added to the supernatural help which I feel my Lord affords, strangely bear me above myself. Soon we shall follow after. O let us make haste to live, that we may be fully ready for the day which manumits us, which calls us from exile home!

" You see, my dear friend, the readiness with which at present, I accept your kind offer. May our God abundantly bless you and yours!

" Your most truly affectionate friend, and sister in Christ, E. RITCHIE."

" Half-past two o'clock.—My beloved father grows weaker and weaker; but he is still in the body.

" Wednesday noon.—Ah! my dear friend, the mortal life of my beloved father and friend is now over! At twenty minutes before ten o'clock this morning, he sweetly fell asleep. I have no time for more.

"This should have come yesterday, but the gate was locked to prevent noise."

"After his removal," continues Miss Ritchie, in her journal, "a blessed sense of the glory upon which my dearest earthly friend had now entered was such as, for a short season, left me incapable of adverting either to my own or to the Church's loss. But a painful sense of both soon flowed in upon me: yet I was graciously supported, and enabled to acquiesce in the Divine will, and at the same time to pay to the memory of the deceased all that was due to that sacred friendship with which he had so long honoured me. My health suffered much from the painful loss I daily felt; yet, if a wish would have recalled him from his great reward, I could not have suffered it to rise in my breast. As soon as Mrs. Rogers was able to resume her charge, I gladly accepted Mrs. Wolfe's invitation to Balham, and felt a singular pleasure in being permitted to pay my first visit after the awful storm, where my dear father had paid his last. It was a favoured season: I felt much freedom with Mrs. Wolfe, and was truly thankful to find her in such an excellent spirit. After spending a few days at Balham, I went to my kind friends at Camberwell. They nursed me with tender care; and we took sweet counsel together. The Lord reward all my dear friends, for the kindness they have shown to a worthless worm! Indeed they are more than kind; they are tenderly affectionate. Our mutual loss has endeared the children of our translated father more sensibly to each other."

The following letter from Lady Maxwell to Miss Ritchie will furnish an important comment on this interesting narrative:—

"*March* 19*th*, 1791.

"I am much indebted to my dear Miss Ritchie for her kind attention, at a time when she must have been so much occupied, and had all her tenderest feelings tried to the uttermost. Your narrative gave much satisfaction to my mind. Though nature felt keenly, I cannot sufficiently adore the goodness of my God, who, from the moment the doleful tidings reached my ears, so encircled me in the Divine arm, so poured his love into my aching heart, as at once to leave it at liberty to pay the tribute so justly due to the memory of the dear departed saint, and also to rest in the fullest acquiescence with his will. Surely all things are possible to them that believe.

"You have been highly privileged these three winters past, in being so much with that eminent servant of God, whose life was such a living comment upon the pure doctrines he taught; and at last how greatly were you honoured in witnessing the closing scene! By faith, I clearly trace him worshipping before the throne; and seem to hold fellowship with his happy spirit. I do not know if I ever heard of a life so crowded with action, so unweariedly filled up, with and for God! Not one vacant moment in the twenty-four hours! Many sons have done well; but if I do not view him through a too flattering medium, he excels them all. The Lord enable us, in our small measure, to be faithful, and to live more to him, by whom it is that we live at all!"

Miss Ritchie remained for a few months in London, and, on the eve of her departure, was summoned to another scene of death. On this occasion she says, "July 19th.—To-day I have attended the remains of Mrs. Hall, the only surviving sister of my honoured father, to the same vault in which his body lies interred. Once more I had the melancholy pleasure of seeing the coffin that contains those sacred relics which, probably, I shall not behold again until that day when the flesh that rests in hope shall rise a glorious body. Mrs. Hall died in peace.

"On the 20th, I set off for Madeley. My spirits were much affected on leaving London; especially the chapel-house. Life is a vapour: all, all on earth is shadow. Blessed be God, I hasten to a world where all is substance!"

During this visit to Madeley, her spirits were refreshed and strengthened by the animating piety of Mrs. Fletcher; as well as by the soothing tenderness of Lady Mary Fitzgerald, who was also in the neighbourhood. With this lady she expresses a peculiar sympathy of spirit, and recognizes in the kindness of her friends the Fountain whence these streams of blessings flow.

September 11th.—On leaving Madeley, she says, "This visit has been a real blessing to me. I have caught fervour from a kindred fire; and long to follow my Lord as closely as my friends here do. Dear Mrs. Fletcher's love, zeal, and humility, make me feel most sensibly that I am far behind. May the Holy Spirit breathe upon me, and infuse more vigour into all my powers!

"I feel the sweetness, the security, of dependence on my adorable Redeemer. I see, I feel, that infinite wisdom, power, and love are engaged to direct, sustain, and comfort me. Jesus Christ has opened the way into 'the holiest;' and by faith I am enabled to enter. O the riches of grace that open to my view! I feel the truth of that word: 'Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father, and are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.' The privileges of this citizenship I now in part enjoy;—light, life, and liberty. The intercourse is open; but I come to my Divine Instructer, to teach me more fully the way of simple faith, that I may learn more of God. I feel a degree of sacred attention: my soul is recollected, and sits, with Mary at the Master's feet; waiting for those brighter manifestations of his glory, which shall transform me more completely into the image of my Lord. I am permitted to hold sacred communion with the militant Church; as well as something very like it with the Church triumphant. Lord, keep me in the secret place of thy presence; and let all my powers be gathered into thee, who art my Saviour, Husband, Brother, Friend!"

Her experience at this time seems to have assumed a character of greater richness and maturity. It was the result of principles that had taken deep root in her nature, rather than the effervescence of excited feeling. Divine truth was apprehended in its just proportions; and its consistency and beauty, as a whole, were contemplated more steadily by enlarged and realizing faith. No undue prominence was now given to one class of the Spirit's operations, to the disparagement of others, at least as indispensable, and as Divine. A transforming energy was moulding her, with gentle influence, into the image of her Lord. The discipline of sanctified affliction had not been endured in vain. A deep and tranquil flow of holy feeling, the result of a clear sense of reconciliation to God through "the blood of sprinkling," and the order of subdued and harmonized affections, diffused a sweet serenity through all her powers. Watchfully alive to the devices of the subtle enemy of souls, she found the armour of the Spirit to be proof against his specious or malignant wiles. Her religious consolations, being the result of permanent and certain causes, flowed as living waters from perennial springs; and no unhallowed thirst for earth's unsatisfying and unsanctioned pleasures disturbed their freshness or transparency.

Miss Ritchie passed the following winter in Yorkshire; and in January, 1792, thus records her continued sense of the Divine goodness:—

"I am kept in perfect peace; but I want a fulness of Gospel blessings; to feel always as I have been permitted to feel at some seasons, deeply and inexpressibly, that 'faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' In visiting the sick I have been much affected, and found the engagement very profitable."

Her concern for others, and faithfulness in admonition, where apparent danger rendered it incumbent duty, will be seen in the following extract:—"I drank tea with Mrs. Crosby.* There were a few persons present, who seemed almost persuaded to be Christians. They are rather in the higher walks of life; but are quite at a stand, as they think they cannot yet give up the world. We dealt faithfully with them; and should they persist in trying to reconcile things in their nature irre-

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[*] Mrs. Crosby and her companion, Miss Tripp, were extensively known in Yorkshire, as Christians eminent for piety and usefulness. Mrs. Crosby was numbered among Miss Ritchie's intimate friends; and was one of her earliest instructers in Divine things.

concilable, and so perish after all, we are clear of their blood. Alas! what a pity it is, that a dread of the reproach of the cross should hinder any from aspiring to the title and privileges of a child of God; and that the insipid, trifling conversation of those who are strangers to themselves should cut them off from intercourse with persons who are conversant with higher and better things! What thanks do I owe to Him, who has brought me out of a soil which yielded no supply for my spiritual wants, into the blessed fields of Divine truth; and has cast my lot among those who are instructed so to feast on the precious fruits which grow there, as to obtain healthful nutriment for their souls!"

Her ingenuous and entire dependence on the providence, as well as on the grace, of God, the following circumstance will prove:—"On Tuesday I had a very peculiar proof of my gracious Lord's tender care over me. Some temporal matters called for my attention: I found myself utterly unable to know how to act; but I went with my usual simplicity to him, and prayed that he would point out my path. He answered me in so direct a manner, as plainly to convince me of what I have repeatedly proved before, that he careth for those who confide in him. At present I am peculiarly called to abide, girding up the loins of my mind, in watchful prayer and waiting faith; that I may more perfectly hope for a full revelation of that grace which shall be brought unto me at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In the following spring, Miss Ritchie visited her friends in Gloucestershire and the neighbouring counties. "The sight of my friends," she says, "was consoling to me. To the unbounded love of my heavenly Father I owe all my mercies. I left them with pure affection, and a heart glowing with gratitude to God and man. Let me meet them again on earth or in heaven, as it seems best to him! My soul enjoys a deep and sweet sense of its union with Christ. This places me on good ground; for all the promises are yea and amen in him."

Christianity is not the parent of stoicism. This perverted feeling had no place in the bosom of Miss Ritchie; who thus writes, on the death of a little favourite niece:—"About ten days ago, I received a letter from Otley, which informed me that my lovely niece, Betsey Ritchie, had had the measles; and that she was still suffering seriously under the effects of the disorder. I immediately laid her case before the Lord. I saw infinite love in the affliction, and could only say, 'Thy will be done.' I own I felt little expectation of her life. Yesterday, another letter informed me that this sweet child had breathed her last. For some hours after I had received the intelligence, resignation, praise, natural affection, and sympathy with the suffering parents, were strangely mingled in my breast. I loved her tenderly;

and, indeed, the peculiar affection she always manifested toward me was so great, that it would have been strange if I had not. When I left home in August my sweet Betsey accompanied me for a short distance on my way; and when we parted said, 'Come home soon, aunt, and me come and meet you.' So thou most likely wilt, my angel niece!—but it will be to welcome me to my everlasting home. I deeply felt the distinction between my feelings as a Christian, and a mortal subjected to human ties. As a Christian, I thankfully acquiesced; for my heart adored the infinite love which I clearly saw in the dispensation: but as a mortal, my emotions expressed themselves in floods of tears, which Jesus did not disapprove. My spirit felt a new tie to the invisible world, and a hallowed nearness by faith to the triumphant Church." If "He who is the greatest of all Beings, is also the kindest, and the gentlest, and the tenderest, and the best;" it is not surprising that those who bear his image, should be imbued with the same sympathies.

The last subjects noticed in Miss Ritchie's journal prove that true patriotism is a genuine fruit of true religion. The interests of her country, and of the world, engaged her solicitude and prayers. During a period of peculiar exigency, she marked with an observant eye the march of Providence; and, by that faith which penetrates the veil of outward causes, discerned the uplifted hand of him who held the rod. This volume of instruction, closed by sevenfold seals from vulgar, selfish, worldly spirits, was perused by her with deep and serious interest. Her meditative mind was quickened to devotion ; while, above the fluctuating elements which agitate this mundane system, she beheld the Church reposing in perfect security beneath the charge of Christ.

"I see," she says, in a letter to her friend Miss Marshall, dated July, 1791, "the hand of God in these events, though Satan is undoubtedly the author of them. The signs of the times seem to me worthy of attention ; and to observe them, confirms me in that blessed truth, 'The Lord reigneth.' I see the Church, the nation, the worlds visible and invisible, so entirely in my Lord's hands, that all I have to do is, to attend to the indications of his will, and keep my eye fixed on the blessed Saviour ; and all shall then be well."

To the same friend she afterward adds :—

"*October*, 1793.

"Perhaps you have heard of the new factory about to be established at Sierra-Leone. One end which the gentlemen engaged in it have in view, is, the abolition of the slave-trade. It is to be cultivated with free, instead of enslaved blacks. Mr. H., who has been the curate of Madeley, is going as chaplain to the factory. He has long believed that his call would some time be to the perishing heathen ; and when this was offered to him, he did not dare to resist, thinking it was very probable that this was the way by which the Lord might choose to spread the Gospel through what is now a very dark part of the world. I mention this, that you may pray for Mr. H., for the poor Africans, and also for the inhabitants of Madeley. It is a trial to dear Mrs. F.; but she sees the Lord's hand in it, and, therefore, meekly submits."

The establishment of this colony, and the circumstances connected with it, though, in themselves, apparently of small importance, yet contained the germs of great events. It assisted to draw forth into the blaze of day the horrors of the slave-trade; and in some fervent, youthful spirits enkindled the first spark of missionary zeal.

The following are the closing paragraphs of the journal :—

"*Clifton, February 3rd*, 1793.—War is declared by France. It seems as if England must take up arms. Lord, thou hast a praying remnant, and wilt, I trust, answer, for the sake of our great High Priest. This morning we had a visit from Sir John Stonehouse: his conversation afforded me pleasure and profit. He left us with an account of Mr. Hervey's last words, which were, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy' —; here death suppressed his voice, and glory unfolded the mysteries of redeeming love to his soul. May my last end be like his!

"April 19th.—This day is appointed, by public authority, for humiliation, prayer, and fasting, on account of the present war. I have found freedom of spirit to pour out my heart before the Lord, and to join in the prayer of faith. Lord, help us as a nation; baffle the crooked serpent's skill; turn his sharp darts aside! Bless our good king: defend him from and defeat his enemies! Bless thine heritage; preserve to us our privileges; and let not the world break in upon us! Keep us by thy power! Let us stand in thy might! And if the spirit of some, who seek to drive us we know not whither, cannot be reclaimed, in the way thou seest best take them from us!—Being by illness detained from public worship, I felt much nearness to God, in secret communion with him in my chamber.

'O love Divine, how sweet thou art!'"

Thus ends a diary, which was continued through more than twenty years. It unfolds the principles upon which the writer's character was formed; and shows the germ of piety expanding to a plant of healthful foliage, bearing rich and seasonable fruit. Now, in the glory of meridian summer, its leaf was beautifully verdant; its roots had deeply struck into a genial soil; and its luxuriant branches spread a cooling shadow over many a sapling in the garden of the Lord. For their sakes, as well as for its own increasing fruitfulness, it was permitted for yet many years to stand among the trees of the spiritual Eden; that He who had created it a "plant of righteousness," beneath whose culture it had flourished, and from whose rain and sunshine it had drawn all its vitality and vigour, might be glorified in its perfection, before he should transplant it into the celestial paradise, to bloom in undecaying verdure beneath more cloudless and congenial skies.

CHAPTER IV.

"Religion is in man the well-spring of all other sound and sincere virtues, from whence both in some sort here, and hereafter more abundantly, his full joy and felicity ariseth, because while he lives he is blessed of God, and when he dies, his works follow him."—Hooker.

Miss Ritchie still pursued an active and diligent course of usefulness. Her time was principally passed among her numerous friends, whom she endeavoured, by her spirit and example, as well as by her more direct counsels on religious subjects, to stimulate in seeking, with an undivided heart, the pearl of priceless value. The young, especially, she sought to influence; knowing well the infinite importance of Christian decision in the dawning day of life.

The following extracts from letters written by Miss March (a lady of eminent piety in Bristol) to her friend J. J., give a pleasing sketch of Miss Ritchie's spirit and character, and show how usefully and how acceptably her zeal and talents were at this time employed.

"*February* 27*th*, 1793.

"We have a profitable prayer meeting on Monday mornings at eleven o'clock, at Mrs. Pine's. Miss Ritchie is in Bristol, and takes the lead. She is a true disciple; a simple, humble follower of the Lamb, devoted in heart and life to Christ; and lives on earth the life of heaven. I find with her unity of spirit: there is that in her which does me good."

"*Bristol, April* 13*th*, 1793.

"Your ideas of Miss Ritchie are just. I am more and more pleased with her truly simple and Christian temper of mind. She seems disposed to lend a helping hand to lift all souls out of 'the mire and clay;' and to assist the weak of the flock, as they have strength, to travel on. I see in her, in a great measure, the answer of that request:—

'Let me in my life express
All the heights of holiness;
Sweetly in my spirit prove
All the depths of humble love.'

As a ministering angel she goes about doing good to the bodies and the souls of her fellow creatures. She has a rare talent; an equal capacity for usefulness in spiritual and temporal things; a ready hand for all the concerns of life, while her spirit soars aloft, often enjoys intimate union with God, and free admittance into his presence, and worships there, in silent awe, reverence, and love. Her deportment operates upon my mind at present, as a reproof for not having made the best use of life, and the best of my way to heaven. She has travelled on, I apprehend, from the beginning, without stopping or staying in all the plain, and has proceeded far on her way to quiet resting places, and sure dwellings in his love, and is walking in that high way of holiness, where no lion or ravenous beast shall come. I do not mean that she is exempt from temptation; but she is truly blessed of the Lord."

"*May* 26*th*, 1795.

"Miss Ritchie is come to stay some time. She will nurse the weak of the flock; and here there are many such. She will also, I hope, do me good. I covet her presence at my dying pillow; as she would speak words of faith, and pray in faith, and administer consolation, and not willingly grieve any of the children of men. She is the disciple of Jesus, whom she follows."*

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* For this interesting document, for one which follows of not less importance, and for other valuable notices, the present work is indebted to Thomas Marriott, Esquire.

This pleasing testimony will be corroborated by the following productions of Miss Ritchie's own pen. They were written to two of her young friends; and evince the wisdom, zeal, and tenderness, with which she entered on the interesting task of recommending true religion to their early and decided choice.

" *Otley.*

" By this time, I hope my dear Miss K. has escaped the snare, in which her reserve, and the subtlety of Satan, had for some time held her. It is very true, many talk too much; and it is to be feared, that the neglect of prayer, and that of hiding the good word in the heart by meditation, is one chief reason why so little fruit appears on many that hear much. But to impose silence on ourselves respecting the work of the Spirit in our hearts, seems to be neither recommended by Scripture nor experience. Were Christians in general to adopt this plan, what would become of Christian fellowship, and what need of the repeated exhortations in sacred Scripture, to ' build each other up in our most holy faith,' to ' bear each other's burdens?' &c. Comfort by the mutual faith of each other would be little known; each would tread a lonely path; and the heightening our joys, quickening our desires, or lessening our sorrows by social intercourse, (the blessed privilege of members of our living Head, in all ages,) would be no more, or at least very rarely, felt.

"Fly, my dear young friend, to the footstool of Him who waits to give you that love which will *simplify* your heart. You need the Gospel mould; it is ready to receive the heart that, by desire after the Saviour, pours itself into it. I am glad to find that you know what you have the greatest need to watch against. Trust not your own heart for a moment, but bring it to Him who is able to change and make it new. 'We cannot serve God and mammon.' Be noble-minded; determine wholly on the Lord's side. Render unto God his due. Now, my dear friend, is the time to make your choice: shadow or substance,—Christ or the world,—profession only and self-pleasing, or the possession of a present Saviour, and that self-denying path which, in lines marked with blood Divine, leads to eternal glory!

"I am ready to anticipate your choice. If you only determine to be wholly on the Lord's side, and act consistently with that determination, Omnipotence itself shall be your defence, and Israel's God will give you grace and glory. If you confess him, he will own and bless you. Let me entreat you, and your dear sister, to be faithful to the light which God has graciously given you. His Spirit has convinced you, that sin's mortal poison has infected all your powers. You must feel its antidote, or suffer the fatal effects for ever. Then fly to your only remedy: let nothing prevent or impede your flight. Pray much, my dear friend, and the sinner's friend will bless you. He waits to do his needy creatures good; and if they will give up forbidden things, his love shall be their portion. In his favour is life: secure this, whatever you gain or lose beside."

The subsequent letter to Miss T——n will show the discrimination with which Miss Ritchie judged of peculiar circumstances, pursuits, and characters, and, consequently, of the different obstacles which prevented prompt decision, on the subject of religion, in the mind of her young friends.

"*Madeley.*

"My Dear Miss T——n,—I wish to hear what effect your late excursion to Brighton has had on both body and mind. You have travelled through a beautiful country, richly filled with the varied goodness of our great Creator. The delightful views about Dorking had, a few weeks before, led my mind from earth to heaven. Thy works

'Thus wondrous fair: thyself how wondrous then!'

Yet, O astonishing love! The Creator of the universe, he who upholds all things by the word of his power, he becomes our Redeemer, and dies, for us rebels, by the hands of the creatures he has made. Seek, my dear friend, seek an acquaintance with him as such. 'All his works praise him;' yet man, while living a stranger to the covenant of promise, is an instrument sadly out of tune. Yet when born of the Spirit, when through the power of Divine grace, he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus, he too joins the general chorus, and, as a being of a higher order, shows forth the glory and the majesty of God. David adds, 'Thy saints give thanks unto thee. They show the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; that thy power, thy glory, and the mightiness of thy kingdom, might be known unto men.' I long that you should become a subject of his kingdom. Your mind rises into what is rational; but I want you to enjoy what is spiritual: pray for the power. At various times the Holy Spirit has graciously touched your heart with a sense of want; but your studies have proved to this blessed spark in you, what the foolish trifles of a moment have been to many others;—they engross your mind, so that its entire vigour is drawn into them. Let me entreat you to be determined that you will take time for private prayer, and for reading the Scriptures as the revealed will of God. They will help you to read yourself; and really, in one sense, that word is true, 'All wisdom centres there.' The soul that sees itself will earnestly desire Christ. Let me hear from you; tell me in what you seek your happiness, what your understanding approves, and whether or no you will follow its light."

Miss Ritchie's progress, from the conclusion of her journal to the period of her marriage, must be traced chiefly through her correspondence; from which it would appear, that her excursions gradually became less extended, and that in Bristol and its vicinity she spent the larger portion of her time. There, in the society of her respected friends, Mrs. P., Mrs. F., and others, she was favoured with retirement, as well as with the pleasures that arise from intellectual and Christian intercourse. Yet, in the midst of many privileges which she greatly valued, frequent claims were made upon her sympathy; and in the chamber of affliction, or beside the dying couch, she sat to utter words of consolation, and minister alike to spiritual and to bodily distress. A few extracts from her letters written at this period will show how tenderly she felt for persons in distressing circumstances; as well as her peculiar talent for improving painful dispensations in the spirit of submissive faith and piety. Recognizing in the sufferings of a Christian the discipline of paternal love and wisdom, she was prepared to offer to her friends such soothing topics of reflection, as tended to allay the present anguish by the hope of a greater and eternal good. The following letter, to Mrs. T. of Camberwell, was written to relieve her anxiety respecting her friend and relative Mrs. F., who was suffering from the fracture of a limb:—

"*Bristol, November* 17*th*, 1798.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Judging of your feelings by my own, before I was under the same roof with our suffering friend, I take up my pen to tell you how we go on. All things considered, she is doing as well as can be expected; but the best is a state of great suffering. Her greatest comfort is, that she is in such good hands; and, blessed be our Rock! he sweetly and powerfully supports and comforts her. She bids me tell you, that her consolations are neither few nor small. She is all poverty and weakness; but our Redeemer is all strength and fulness; and her spirit has such a sight of the suitableness between him and herself, (with a power to take hold on him by faith,) as infuses Divine resignation and peace throughout the inner man. But the poor body suffers much; every part seems to sympathize with the broken limb. Our dear friend is learning, by a very painful process, some lessons respecting the head and the members, which our gracious High Priest blesses both to her edification, and, I trust, to ours. This afflictive dispensation will, I hope, be sanctified to us all. Mrs. F.'s children and friends have a striking proof before their eyes of the power of real Christianity. Nothing but religion can gild the gloom of affliction. O that all my young friends at Camberwell may seek that acquaintance with the Saviour which will enable them to rejoice in tribulation! For life, at the best, is but a chequered path. But communion with God turns our evil into good; our present pain into future pleasure.

"I find that the time of a broken limb's beginning to ossify, is very different in different subjects. I fear Mrs. F.'s will not be one of the quickest. But she is in the hands of infinite love; and he can invert the order of nature, if it will conduce most to his own glory.

"November 27th.—I spent an hour with dear Miss Johnson* on Sunday evening. I cannot give you a better description of the state of her mind than by telling you, that, on my reading to her a letter from dear Lady Mary Fitzgerald, wherein she inquired whether 'the corruptible body did press down the spirit,' she replied, 'My soul springs up,' (using a most expressive motion with her hand,) 'my soul springs up; it ascertains its right, it feels the resurrection's power.' I felt as if with a spirit almost glorified! The heaven that appeared in her countenance is inexpressible. She is very weak, but not in much pain. We hold her with a trembling hand, and daily expect to hear that she has joined the Church of the first-born. I long to catch the mantle of our departing Elijahs; and to follow them, as they followed Christ. My soul does breathe the air of paradise. God has so moulded my spirit, that I feel no relish for any thing but what leads me nearer to himself. But a sweet, deep degree of spirituality opens before me; and closer union with my Saviour will bring me into it. To effect this, my dear friend, the Lord varies his dealings with us. May all answer the end!—Then all will be well. We are sorry to hear you have been so poorly; and pray our Lord to direct you which of the advised methods to pursue. That every new-covenant blessing may be your portion, prays

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* This lady was one of the stars of Methodism in Bristol, and a friend and correspondent of Mr. Wesley.

"Yours, &c, E. Ritchie."

It will be recollected, that, at the commencement of her religious course, Miss Ritchie was called to the deliberate sacrifice of the friendships of this world, with all the flattering prospects of advantage, which, in that direction, were just opening to her view. She had the courage to forego its fair pretensions, and to follow the less specious, though more safe and honourable, path of Christian holiness. By a preference so truly wise and noble, she gave honour to her God; and he, in his omniscient providence, prepared a rich equivalent for every costly offering she had made. Perhaps few persons, circumstanced as she was, have become the centre of attraction to so wide a circle of truly estimable friends. With several individuals, eminent for talents, station, and piety, she maintained a regular correspondence. A few selections from these interesting communications will show the principles by which they were united; although, in their internal temperament, they varied as completely from each other, as in the character of their external circumstances.

From Lady Mary Fitzgerald, with whose intimate and affectionate friendship Miss Ritchie was for many years favoured, she received about this time several letters, two of which shall be here inserted :—

"*London, November 23rd,* 1798.

"MY DEAR MISS RITCHIE,—I cannot express how much I was shocked at hearing last night of our dear and valuable friend's distressing accident. She has scarcely been out of my thoughts since, either sleeping or waking. After you have been so good as to give me the whole account, I hope you will, from time to time, let me know how she goes on. Much is to be learned from such lessons. How little do we know, when we go out of our houses, what is to befall us before we return to them! But this we know, that all shall work together for good to those who love the Lord; and what we know not now we shall know hereafter. Here, 'we see through a glass darkly;' therefore, we are called upon to believe and trust: by and by faith shall be turned into sight. Though I have been, in general, in a very stupid, dull, dead frame of spirit, I had, the other morning, a most comfortable view of the happiness of beholding our Tri-une God and Saviour, without interruption or intermission, for ever and for ever. I cannot express how delightful that 'for ever' appeared; and, though Satan was at my elbow with his fearful injections, that such anticipations were in my case presumptuous, the Lord reminded me that his grace, and not my worthiness, was the all-availing plea; and that therefore, as the chief of sinners, I might put in my humble request to be accepted for his name's sake alone. O, adored be his name, Jesus!"

"*London, December 5th*, 1798.

"Many thanks, my dear friend, for your kind compliance with my request. Our beloved sufferer's state of soul is truly enviable, and to be rejoiced in; but I feel much for her poor body. Yet, I know that she is in safe and omnipotent hands; and that God loves her better than I can do. He works thus for his own glory and her good, to brighten her crown, and to show to all with whom she converses the power of his grace, in keeping her soul in perfect peace, because her mind is stayed on him. I am ready to envy you, who have an opportunity of being a comfort and of use to her. Old as I am, I should think myself happy, and highly honoured, if I were near to help or to sit up with her.

"I must now thank you for your account of our beloved Miss Johnson,—by this time, perhaps, a happy spirit escaped from the body; a happy spirit, even in the poor, perishing clay; but supremely so if she has dropped it. If she be still in it, I beg her prayers; as I do your own. Dear Mrs. Fletcher, I have been informed, is poorly; she could scarcely get through the fatigues of the thanksgiving day.

"What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies? Alas! I have nothing but my poor, mean thanks and praises! Every moment adds to my great debt, and I have nothing to pay; so he frankly forgives me all, and adds more favours and more blessings daily. O that I could thank and love him as I ought to do! My God! my God! accept my poor mite of praise and gratitude, when well washed in the atoning blood of my adorable Redeemer!

"You live in rich pastures as to Gospel ordinances. I should be thankful to enjoy them, and to be admitted to some of our dear friends' more private meetings; to join in spirit, and to reap the benefit of their and your prayers. I know not as yet, whether I am to be of your party; but I feel a pleasure in the uncertainty. We are always in our Lord's gracious hands; but it is pleasant to feel it in a peculiar manner, and the more so as I used to find uncertainty so remarkably displeasing to my impatient nature: but my blessed Lord has, in a measure, taught me otherwise. All glory be to his name for that, and for all things!

"I seem to be so out of patience with poor, wretched self, as almost to bring a shadow of murmuring or discontent that is truly painful; at least the cloud rests upon the tabernacle, and I do not seem to journey. However I know that our gracious Lord can in a moment remove it, and command and enable me again to go forward; therefore will I strive to wait patiently on him who is my sun, though he refuse to shine. Blessed be his name! I dwell for ever on his heart, as my great High Priest;

and for ever he on mine, although not always equally felt by his sensible presence."

The cup of sorrow, in this fallen world is speedily transferred from lip to lip. The indisposition noticed at the close of Miss Ritchie's last letter to her friend Mrs. T——n, soon assumed the character of mortal sickness; and a fresh occasion was presented for the Christian sympathy of one who never shunned the house of mourning, or shrunk from scenes of suffering, either through the dread of personal endurance, or from cold and heartless apathy.

The valuable and distinguished friend to whom that letter was addressed, by the advice of her physicians, went to Bath; and thence after a few months of patient and sanctified affliction, passed in calm and holy triumph to her everlasting rest. She was a woman of no ordinary mental stature; but, to a strong and reflective intellect, united erudition and accomplishments, which, at that period especially, came not within the usual limits of a female education. She was honoured with the friendship of the venerable Wesley, who visited the family, and was the centre of delighted interest to them, and to the social circle who were privileged to meet him there, and listen to his animating and instructive conversation; which, when younger persons formed his audience, he felt pleasure in adapting to their circumstances. Well he knew the force and value of impressions made upon the opening mind. With him, religion was a ceaseless spring of cheerfulness and wisdom; and both by precept and example, he inculcated upon his rising charge, that "all her ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

The Bath waters, however, afforded Mrs. T. but little relief; and her complaints increasing, Miss Ritchie was soon found in the sick chamber of her afflicted friend. Through the last trying month of her mortal pilgrimage, she was her constant and assiduous attendant; and, for the edification of Mrs. T.'s family and friends, drew up a beautiful and touching narrative of the circumstances of that interesting period. A few extracts will not only elucidate the character of the sufferer, but the power of that Divine religion by whose principles and consolations she was strengthened to endure affliction; to surmount the fear of death; and, by an elevating faith, to rise into sublime companionship with the felicities and glories of the world beyond.

"On one occasion," says Miss Ritchie, "when speaking of the excellency of the Holy Scriptures, Mrs. T. observed, 'What condescension in God, thus to address his creatures! The Bible is the best book; it is the truth. Lately I have read little else; and, should I live, it shall be my one book. It contains every thing. I feel my weakness, and it calls upon me to trust in the Lord Jehovah; *for in* *him is everlasting strength.* She then requested a friend to read Isaiah xxv, and to pray with her. It seemed like worshipping before the throne. How near is heaven to earth!"

These encomiums on the value of the Holy Scriptures were not the result of blind prejudice, or of morbidly-excited feeling. They were testimonies to their truth and excellence, drawn forth by frequent, long, and studious examination. By Mrs. T. they had been subjected to the ordeal of criticism in their original tongues, and tested by the experience of a long religious life. She was, therefore, a competent witness; and on the verge of eternity is heard urging on her children and friends, as her dying injunction, to read the Bible, to search the Scriptures. How admonitory, how instructive is this!

It would be easy to linger on the beautiful and solemn picture of a Christian's gradual disengagement from earth, and its most tender and endearing interests; heightened as it is in the present instance, by the irradiations of intellect, as well as by the glow of devotion. But one farther extract must suffice:—

"Mrs. T. having been told that Miss Martha More had frequently called when she was too ill to see any one, she said, 'I love her and all that family; they fill an important station. There are few people of talent who can bear to know their own importance. But it ought to humble and stimulate to a right use of them; for talents for the good of others are awful trusts committed to our care. It is not at our option whether we use them, or not. I have often had serious thoughts upon this subject. It is seldom we see such a family as the Mores.' Finding herself a little better, she desired to see Miss More. 'You see me,' she said, 'weak in body; but my mind is vigorous. Yours is a singular family. God has given great talents to you all; and it is true wisdom to know the part we are called to act, and to fulfil it. We are little aware of the loss we shall sustain, if we do not properly fill up the place for which we are fitted. I have had awful views of this,—such views as have influenced my intentions. I have aimed at using what was committed to me, to the glory of God; and though I have fallen far short of my aim, yet I am now thankful that my endeavours were directed to what, at this important moment, my mind fully approves. I am a weak, helpless creature; and I do not speak because I have filled my place, or done the work assigned me;—no, I have only aimed at it;—but because I wish that all had a proper sense of the increasing enjoyment they may attain to by a right use of their time and talents. The necessity of this appears from the apostle's words, *Press toward the mark: covet earnestly the best gifts:* and from our Lord's account of the ten virgins. They were all entrusted with talents; all had light, and all had gifts; but the wise improved, the foolish neglected their talents. You are engaged in a good work; may you go on and prosper! If he that giveth a cup of cold water shall not loose his reward, the service of those who seek the spiritual good of their fellow creatures shall surely be remembered. God is faithful; I am a poor worm, but I have found him so, beyond what I could have hoped. Often in my chamber have I prayed,

> When pain o'er this weak flesh prevails,
>   With lamb-like patience arm my breast;
> When grief my wounded soul assails,
>   In lowly meekness may I rest!

And I have had a strong assurance that it should be so; insomuch that I have frequently returned to my knees, to thank God for what I believed he would do. I have often poured forth my soul in prayer respecting the hour that now draws near: I had reason to believe he would be with me, and now he is answering my faith. If a petition is presented, we know it was accepted if the thing petitioned for is granted:—does it not amount to a certainty? Spiritual things are realities: faith produces effects: God is faithful to his word.' Then, turning to her children, she said, 'My dear children, let no one cheat you out of immortality.' Looking earnestly at Miss More, she added, 'I love you, and pray to God to bless you, and your dear sisters.' Miss More was much affected, and thanked her for her prayers. 'We often ask,' she replied, 'the prayers of others; but have only faint conceptions of the love and benevolence of the prayer of Jesus for us."

The deep, practical importance of these subjects, every Christian mind will strongly feel; and at the same time will thankfully acknowledge, that in years of health and vigour it is not vain to pray for grace, to meet the exigencies of a dying hour. Beneath a sky so rich and cloudless, who would not desire to sink to rest?

Miss Ritchie's close and protracted attendance on her sick and dying friends excited the solicitude of those who survive, on her own account. Lady Mary Fitzgerald kindly inquires, "how has our blessed Lord supported your weak frame through such a variety of repeated trials as you have had, following so closely one upon the other? It really appears to me little less than a miracle. The various accounts received from you of suffering and dying friends, I have found truly edifying. O that my life were more like your own, and those you have attended! I am a poor cumberer of the ground; yet, I trust, our blessed Saviour pardons, and has redeemed me; but I daily feel the want ot sanctifying grace.

"Mr. Newton,* who was with me yesterday morning, told me that he had advised Mr. T——n to let your account of his precious wife be printed, and that he has consented. I shall rejoice in receiving some copies of it.

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* The late venerable rector of St. Mary Woolnoth's.

"I must set about making up a little parcel of tracts, which I shall direct to you, that you and our dear friends may enjoy them, whether I live or *die*. That is a solemn word, and contains matter of vast importance. As I wrote it, a thought passed through my mind: Where shall my immortal part be while my friends are enjoying these tracts? Sometimes I am permitted so to rejoice in hope, that I even long to depart; and at other times, I have such humbling views of the sins of my nature, of the greatest part of my life devoted to sin, Satan, and the present world, and not only my short comings, at the best, but of the coldness of my repentance, the deadness and, for the most part, the formality of my prayers and duties, that it appears to me presumption for such a worm as I to hope. Yet, blessed be his holy name! he does not suffer me to despair, but brings to my mind sweet and encouraging texts;—above all, that gracious promise, not to cast out any that come to him. It is my misery that I do not feel that total resignation of will that I wish and pray for; yet, sometimes it has occurred to me, as Mrs. T——n so sweetly expresses it, that 'we certainly have the answer of our prayers.' I am charmed with all you repeat of her sayings; and earnestly pray, O may my latter end be like hers!"

The expansions of Christian sympathy adapt themselves to the vicissitudes of human life;

so that the apostolic precepts to "rejoice with those that do rejoice," and to "weep with those who weep," are not incompatible, even though required to be almost simultaneously fulfilled. While Miss Ritchie was much engaged in performing offices of friendship in the chamber of affliction, she was not insensible to that more cheerful class of feelings which are excited by the bright and palmy scenes of life. To two friends, (Mr. and Mrs. J——,) who had lately been united in the dearest of all earthly ties, she wrote as follows:—

"*Bath, January* 31*st*, 1798.

"It has not been owing to a want of warm desire for the real and permanent happiness of my dear friends, that my pen has not, ere this time, expressed how sincerely I wish them every blessing our God can bestow; and that he may make them truly helpful to each other in their journey through this wilderness to Mount Zion. My heart has prayed, and shall still pray, that the God of love may smile upon their union, and make every change in their outward circumstances a blessed means of bringing them nearer to himself.

"Will my dear friends excuse me? The love my heart feels toward them induces me to believe they will. Then I will venture to speak freely, and to write as one who loves them, and shall soon meet them in the world of spirits. Seek all your happiness in God: he is the fountain of true felicity. The most rational of all creature comforts—sanctified friendship—is but a stream; but when enjoyed in him it is a pleasant one, and often proves a blessed channel which conducts us to its source. See, my dear friends, that you draw each other nearer to God; and that you begin as you would wish to end. Set up an altar for God in your house. My prayer for you both is, that you may in all things honour Him who saith, 'Them that honour me, I will honour;' then shall your happiness be permanent, and your enjoyments only beginning when this transitory but important scene shall close."

Again;—

'*Clifton, April*, 1798.

"The office of friendship is to sweeten life, and accelerate the movements of our friends heavenward; how much more, of those sacred ties by which you are now united? Life is the dressing room for eternity. We are called to put off the old man, with his deeds, and to put on the Lord Jesus Christ; to put on the whole armour of God;—and we need it in the warfare to which we are called; we cannot stand without it. My dear friends, endeavour to strengthen each other in God. Pray together; converse freely on your helps and hinderances. You may be made to each other spiritually that which will secure the constant smile of Heaven on your union. Human life is, at the best, but a chequered state; yet, foolish as we are, we look for rest when we should prepare for war; expecting our happiness to arise from having every thing according to our own wish, rather than in resignation to the will of Him who sees what will eventually be best for each of us, and who gives caustics or cordials, as his wisdom directs, for our good. It is at the Saviour's feet alone that we can learn the lessons on which depend our present and eternal happiness.

"Here, at a distance from the dissipation occasioned by too much intercourse with the creatures, and gathered in, from the hurry and bustle of our own spirits, to a sacred attention to our Divine teacher, we hear the voice which speaks reproof, direction, and comfort; and the more we cultivate this spirit, the better shall we be able to profit by all the outward helps that surround us.

"May every covenant blessing be the portion of my friend! Thus prays her affectionate E. Ritchie."

To the same friend she again writes:—

"*Bristol*, 1799.

"Sick rooms, dying beds, and performing the last offices of friendship to departed and departing friends, have prevented my congratulating my dear friends on the mercies vouchsafed to them. Permit me now to tell you, we rejoice in all your joy.

"Within the last fortnight, six persons have been summoned from this society to Abraham's bosom. Dear Mrs. Johnson I was much with. Toward the last I seldom left her, either night or day. Her end was what you might expect, at the termination of a fifty-five years' close walk with God. She suffered much in body; but all was peace within. Never did a pining exile long to be recalled from banishment, or a weary traveller to reach a beloved home, more than she did to burst the shell, and spring into the fulness of that life of which she had so largely been partaking while in a prison of clay. About two hours before her departure, she attempted to say, 'I have fought a good fight;' but her breath failed, and she could not proceed. An hour after, she cried out, 'Come, Lord! come! come!'—and a little after, 'Lord!'—with which word she sunk into the bosom of her God.

"With good old Mr. Durbin I also spent some hours very profitably. He told me, that, when only sixteen years of age, he and several serious young men used to meet together, in a kind of religious society, before Mr. Wesley visited Bristol. When he came, they invited him to meet with them, and he proved a second Peter to these Corneliuses. Some of them became the first members of the Methodist society in that city. Mr. D. added, 'I now feel eternal life abiding in me. I know in whom I have believed, and he will keep what I have committed unto him.' He was eighty-eight years of age. Several others are on the wing."

It is scarcely possible to read these repeated instances of the triumph of Christianity over man's mortal foe, without joining with the Church of England in the devout language of her communion service :—"We bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear ; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom."

To the same friend she writes thus :—

"*Otley, April*, 1800.

"My path has been a chequered one this last year ; and my Lord has called me to pass through some such exercises as I never knew before. Blessed be his name! he has been with me; the floods have not overflowed, nor has the fire kindled upon me. My God has been my refuge, my hiding place, my strength, and my salvation. Last July, my dear and only brother was suddenly called out of time into a blessed eternity. I was at Bristol when the awful tidings reached me: but they were as unexpected to my dear mother, who resided in Otley. Overwhelmed by so sudden a stroke, 'I became dumb, I opened not my mouth, because the Lord had done it.' My heart bled, but my will was bowed to his. My health suffered much ; and for some months I knew not whether my dear mother would not live to see both her children called home. About a fortnight ago I was sent for from Leeds, to attend the sick room and dying bed of a dear friend. Her chamber is often a Bethel: our hearts have been filled with the Divine presence while worshipping before the throne. O, my dear friend, live to God, and he will be with you in that hour of trial, through which she is now passing!"

To the same:—

"*Bristol*, 1801.

"Your sister, I hear, has gained the port. Why do we survive our fellows? Only to get more fully ready for our change. May the intended end be answered, and each of us be ripened for heaven! This, this is the business of life; and, blessed be God! I feel it is the constant desire of my heart. Those words have been peculiarly present with me: 'Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.' We feel the death spiritually, and naturally too, when, by its sentence executed on the body, our beloved friends are taken from us; and, thanks be to our great deliverer! we feel a little of the resurrection spiritually; but soon our friends shall be restored. After we, with them, have slept in the grave, what a glorious morning shall our eyes behold! Till then, let us live for that world to which we are hastening; every moment coming for fresh power to Christ, our living head.

"Affectionately yours, E. RITCHIE."

The following letter from Lady Mary Fitzgerald, on the subject of the many bereavements mentioned in Miss Ritchie's correspondence with her friend, Miss Johnson, will be perused with interest. It is another specimen of the humble, yet elevated, piety which characterized this excellent and amiable lady; and it is truly gratifying, as exhibiting religion in beautiful combination with exalted rank :—

"*London*, 1797.

"My Very Dear Friend,—A thousand thanks for the delightful letter I have just received from you. Glory be to our adorable God and Saviour, for all his mercies to his dear children! I rejoice in the happy departure of that venerable saint, Mr. Durbin, and those others who have followed our beloved Miss Johnson in the ways of holiness, and have now joined her, and the celestial choir, in singing praises to God and the Lamb. O happy those who are safe arrived, and behold his glorious face! How one longs to be with them; and to see him without a veil, praise him without weariness or interruption, and thank him without ceasing! Surely if such a worm as I am permitted to enter in, I shall sing louder, and also bring more glory to his mercy, patience, forbearance, and long-suffering, than any other of the redeemed. My soul pants after more gratitude, faith, and love, and humble communion with God. Your letter, my dear friend, seems to have a little stirred up my cold and languid spirit. O for a deeper, a more humbling, sense of my own depravity, that I may the more thankfully adore redeeming love!

"I am astonished at the mercy of God when I look into myself, and think what I have been; how vile, how careless, how prone to every evil! I am truly ashamed that I still come so far short of the glory of God, as well as of the sin that accompanies my best actions, and holiest duties. Surely I, of all people, may lay my mouth in the dust, and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean; totally depraved, and guilty!' before a holy God. I have nothing to plead but mercy, —free, boundless mercy,—through the blood and righteousness of my adorable Redeemer!

"Pray for me, my dear friend, that I may live to Him whose I am by every tie, and whom I wish to serve with a holy obedience. Help me to praise him for bearing with such a worthless worm as I am for above seventy years. O! I am ashamed to think that I have received natural life from him for so long a period, and have made so slow a progress in the Divine life. May my last days be my best days, my holiest, my most devoted days!

"Affectionately yours,
"M. FITZGERALD."

The following letter, from Lady Maxwell, alludes to Miss Ritchie's bereavement in the loss of her only brother. Dissimilarity in every thing but the one great uniting principle of vital piety will mark the difference in individual character between this writer and the last.

"*Rose Mount, near Edinburgh,*
December, 1799.

"I feel for dear Miss Ritchie's sore trial; but believe it is her privilege to rise above the painful dispensation, and with heart-felt and sweet resignation to say, 'It is the doing of my God, whose will is so precious to me: I cannot choose,'—yet feeling tenderly her loss. Apathy is no friend to religion. It is in the nature of Divine love to rise superior to whatever would press it down; it must be above. It is a noble, generous principle. May this pure love flow in copious streams through your soul, and daily increase! Speaking after the manner of men, it is indeed a severe stroke to the society; but I see it such an easy matter for the Lord, who loves his people, fully and quickly to supply the vacancy, that I am not permitted to dwell upon it. God is love! What an endearing character! I seem to see, and feel, that all things may be obtained by prayer, that are for the glory of God, and the real good of those who belong to him, whether as individuals, or as a collective body.

"Some weeks ago, when at the throne of grace, the Saviour said to me, 'Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' These words seemed to set fire to my spirit; multitudes of souls were set before me to pray for; yea, I would have grasped the whole world of sinners, and brought them to the dear Redeemer. Soon after this, when meditating upon the wonderful condescension and goodness of my Lord, in speaking thus graciously to me who am but 'dust and ashes,' he again drew nigh to my spirit, and said, 'Ask what ye will in my name, and it shall be done for you.' I felt myself lost, and swallowed up in wonder, love and praise. No language can express my feelings; but from the holy nearness to Deity with which Miss Ritchie is favoured, she can suppose what they were. I endeavoured to improve the great latitude of prayer given to me; and have often wished that this feeble body would have permitted my spending nights and days at the throne of grace.

"For many months I have been getting nearer to Jehovah. What intercourse with him do I enjoy! What holy, reverential awe! What depths of love! What glories open to my view! Eternity alone can unfold the wonders of his love to me. Assist me by your prayers, that I may be found faithful, fruitful, and more useful.

"I shall be pleased to hear that your grief is lost in love and praise; and that your brother's place is well filled up. With Christian regard, I remain,

"Dear Miss Ritchie's friend in Jesus,
"D. MAXWELL."

In another letter on the subject of Miss Johnson's death, Lady Maxwell says,—

"I feel my loss. Such a praying friend, and deeply experienced Christian, is rarely to be met with. But thanks, eternal thanks, to the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, who has taught me, and does permit me, to come to the fountain. Of late he has brought me near to himself. I hope I may venture to say, that my prospects widen, and my experience deepens. I seem to sink deeper into Deity; and more than ever to lose my will in his. I find the will of my God so precious, that I hardly know how to form a petition, but, 'Thy will be done;' and he is so indulgent, so tender toward me, that no language can better express it, than the 2d and 3d verses of Isaiah xxvii."

In July, 1800, Lady Maxwell again addresses her friend :—

"I am pleased to see that the arm which is full of power has raised you above the painful pressure occasioned by your brother's removal. Surely, God delights in the happiness of his children. God is love. How deeply have I proved this, since my last to Miss Ritchie!

"I have been brought sensibly nearer to Jehovah; and have had more of his fulness poured into my soul;—such deep and intimate fellowship with him, as no language can express. Yet I have no rapturous joy; my experience never runs in this channel. It is all (though exquisite enjoyment) a solemn, sacred awe, that, as it were, arrests all the powers of my mind, keeps them still as the grave before Jehovah, and fills the soul with holy recollection, self-possession, and strong attraction to internal objects. All this goodness of the Lord has not prevented, but rather provoked, the malice of the adverse powers, who have done all they are permitted to do, to harass me; but the name of the Lord proves a strong tower, to which I fly, and they dare not enter.

"With good wishes for still greater prosperity to your soul, and success in all your labours of love, and that the name of our God may be glorified from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, I remain, dear Miss Ritchie's fellow traveller to Zion,

"D. Maxwell."

What an expanse does experimental Christianity unfold to the interior eye! With what sublime ideas does it fill the mind! With what objects does it bring it into contact! On worlds and beings of a nobler order, it expatiates in lofty contemplation; it unites in reverent homage with adoring angels; it walks and talks with God. How elevated are these privileges; yet how veiled from unanointed eyes! Immersed in earthly interests, enthralled by needless and by needful cares, how often are the higher principles and objects of a Divine and an ennobling faith obscured, even to the view of those who are convinced of the reality of things unseen! In the preceding instance, each internal sense is quickened into vigorous exercise; all the soul is eye and ear; the entrance to the holiest is laid open; and access is granted to the spirit, which in silent adoration listens to the voice that condescendingly invites it to draw near, to taste still richer blessings, and to receive more copious gifts from the full treasures of eternal love.

Yet to minds thus favoured, who inhale an element so pure, and so spiritual, how precious is the Word of God! By this, as in the balance of the sanctuary, must every impulse and perception of the soul be weighed. Impressions, feelings, manifestations, must all be tested by this standard; which, while it confounds that pride of intellect which delights in apprehending mysteries, and dissolves the fervid creations of enthusiasm, establishes upon the impregnable basis of Divine truth the genuine experience of the devout and upright Christian.

Nor, while bound to weigh in this sacred scale every particle of possessed or of anticipated treasure, are we confined within narrow bounds. All that the human capacity, in its renovated state, can conceive of God, of holiness, of heaven, is promised in the holy volume of inspiration; and, by the power of the eternal Spirit, shall be unfolded in the believer's breast. But a docile intellect, and a chastised imagination, are essential to a reverent and an enlightened apprehension of the truth. In religion, as in its Divine Author, all is permanent, substantial, solemn; and with the oracles of Scripture will the instructions of the teaching Spirit invariably accord. All that is emphatically his work in the human heart will be there found to have its prototype and sanction; and will exhibit signs of sterling value, in proportion to the strictness of the test by which it is assayed.

Another letter from a correspondent, as unlike in intellectual structure to either of the preceding ones, as they were to each other, may now be seasonably introduced. It is so important in its subject, and displays so much discernment and sound sense, as to render it an interesting specimen of the valuable writer's style and cast of thought. The only date it bears is "*Friday.*" Neither names nor places are specified.

"I am thankful for my parting interview, and for the hearing of Lady M——'s letters; although I thought at the time they were so greatly beyond me, that I should probably gain no good from them. Yet I have since found, that they left on my mind a more sublime idea of the blessed God, which disposes to adoration and worship. I already find, though I go on lamely, that the aiming more constantly and steadily to seek the face of God, has a good tendency; and I am thoroughly persuaded, that no rules about the rest of my conduct can secure me from evil so effectually. Yet those rules are not to be overlooked; for, my dear Miss Ritchie, what shall I say to your friend, at whose house we met? I have been long accustomed to consider her as a very spiritual and devoted Christian, who lives near to God in prayer, and enjoys abiding peace in his presence. This peace, I have always found, (in any degree that I could attain to it,) qualifies and enables for action. What, then, am I to think, when I evidently see that she lives in the constant neglect of that most important duty?—I mean the government of her children. Both their tempers and health are injured for want of discipline; and thereby their souls. Habits of self-will and passion are formed; no habit of self-denial in any kind; no due arrangement of their time, their food, their employment;—and it is an evident fallacy to say, that their own good sense corrects the turbulence of their tempers when they grow older. I saw plainly the same fund of self-will in the elder ones; though common pride, from a sense of decorum, would prevent its breaking out as it does in the younger. But I question whether direct opposition, however wise, would be borne. Our dear friend appears to me to have sacrificed what she owes to her children, to her love of ease, and of that quietness which *looks* more like spirituality than it is. Has she not, therefore, suffered, for want of having duty clearly laid before her in the beginning, and the word of exhortation directed to the point where she needed it? The long neglect of duty has rendered it now next to impossible to perform it; which is a very serious consideration. I see that she only looks on the evil and error that lies over against her, as unwise and untempered severity, and appears to have no conviction but that she fulfils her duty. Her example influences others; and what is truly amiable in her seals it. The friends that were there on Wednesday said something on the subject, exactly suited to persuade her that she had taken the right method. Yet, one thing convinces me that she wants the inward testimony of it; —her mind seems sore at the distant touch of reproof. I assure you I could not be much with her without great pain. It appears to me in a very serious light. My dear Mr. B. says, he thinks the maxim, that 'we are *really* what we are *relatively*,' should be more attended to in the Church; and defect in duty more looked to than any frame of mind, which may appear very spiritual, but which, in that case, must have large deductions. I believe that such a rule of judgment would be beneficial to many, and would purify others; and, to persons entering upon life, it might be, through grace, a preservative from wrong conduct. There is no doubt, from Scripture and reason, that the first childhood is the time for correction, in order that authority may be impressed; and the custom of enticing children, by promises and playthings to do what they ought to do at command, is very pernicious: it opens a wide door for contest, and also prevents their acquiring the idea of duty, which is the foundation of moral sense, and the best preparation for Christianity.

"I could not but open my heart, in part, to you on this subject; and now, commending myself to your best remembrance, remain

"Yours, &c, E. M. Bates."

CHAPTER V.

"As the whole attention of life should be to obey God's commands, so the highest enjoyment of it must arise from the contemplation of his character, and our relation to it."—Bishop Butler.

A new sphere of duty was preparing for the subject of these memoirs, which may be said to constitute the third period of her valuable life. By the gentleman who many years before had offered her his hand in marriage, as has been previously noticed, she was again addressed; and, former reasons now no longer operating, she accepted his proposals; and consented to assume the superintendence of a large and rising family. On the first of November, 1801, Miss Ritchie was married to Harvey Walklake Mortimer, Esq. From this time her residence was fixed in London and its vicinity; and here, though called to exercise her talents in a new direction, they were not less successfully or usefully employed. The domestic circle afforded ample occupation for her time, thoughts, and energies; and though hitherto unpractised in these duties, her wisdom, picty, and prudence produced the most desirable results. With solicitous affection she endeavoured to fulfil the obligations of those new relationships to which she now stood pledged ; and so discreetly did she occupy her difficult yet most important station, as to secure the cordial love, esteem, and confidence of those who were the objects of her kind concern ; from whom she constantly received the most sincere, heart-felt, and gratifying testimonies of that regard and veneration which her whole deportment tended to inspire. She lived, indeed, before them as an exemplary pattern, not of meditative merely, but of diligent and active, piety ; nor had the sphere of spiritual engagement, in which till now she had been occupied, unfitted her for those more ordinary cares and duties, whose appropriate fulfilment constitutes the order, harmony, and satisfaction of social and domestic life. A sound judgment, induced by observation and reflection, regulated her conduct, in conjunction with religious principle, in the small, as well as in the great concerns of life. It is probable that from Mr. Wesley, the venerable friend of her earlier years, she had learned how to acquire that power of self-possession, self-control, and general equanimity of temper, which she maintained with such consistency, and by which she was admirably qualified for the station now assigned to her by the providence of God. Punctuality was essential to the previous habits of him whom it had now become her duty, as well as her desire, in all things to honour and accommodate. This to her was no constraint. From a sense of the value of time, she had long been trained to its orderly arrangement and occupation. She was, therefore, by previous consideration, guarded against hurry and embarrassment; and thus avoided that distraction which less systematic conduct is but too well calculated to induce.

The result was favourable to her young charge. The minds of her two daughters, especially, who were the long-continued and more immediate objects of her care, were modelled on the same principles as her own. In early life they embraced religion; and resolved to seek in a course of Christian piety, the appropriate and only blessed portion of a spirit born for everlasting life. For the guide of their youth;—for her whose instructions, and whose discipline, were applied in so wise and so salutary a manner to the correction of those outbreakings of the fallen nature, which childhood exhibits so early, and which to counteract, requires continued, sedulous, and affectionate effort;—for the friend, counsellor, and confident of their maturer years;—they cherished during life the warmest emotions of esteem, affection, and gratitude, and now bedew her memory with tears of filial reverence; rejoicing in the delightful anticipation of a happy reunion in the paradise of perfected bliss.

Although Mrs. Mortimer's domestic occupations were various and extensive, yet they did not entirely engross her. She did not neglect to employ those talents which were entrusted to her for the benefit of the Church. As the leader of a class, she filled, with great effect, a most important and responsible department. The poor and the sick were objects of her kind attention; and her now augmented means of rendering them assistance were to herself a source of pleasure and of thankfulness. Nor did she, under altered circumstances, less esteem or love her friends. Her intercourse with most of them, though more occasional and circumscribed, was not relinquished, but either personally or by letter confidentially continued to the close of life.

On this important change of circumstances she entered, in the full persuasion that she was following the course of Divine Providence; and regarded it always as the wise arrangement of her heavenly Father, thus preparing for her, not only a sphere of usefulness, but a tabernacle of repose and comfort during the later period of her pilgrimage; when, exempt from many previous trials and perplexities, she might be tranquilly preparing for her better rest in heaven. From a document, containing some occasional notices of her external and internal state through several subsequent years, this evidently appears to have been the conviction of her mind.

During the autumn of 1803, Mrs. Mortimer visited Yorkshire, and has left the following record of her journey:—

"On Thursday, September 15th, I set out

for Yorkshire; and, through the mercy of my God, reached Ivy house the next day. Here I was informed, that my dear mother had broken her arm, and dislocated her hip, by a fall. I hastened to Otley, and found her confined to her bed; but in such a spirit as quite surprised me. She addressed me thus: 'Betsey, do not fret! It is all mercy; it is a blessed affliction. The Lord does all things well: he is good to me. Every body is kind to me. I will praise my God!' During the whole of my stay, she continued in this spirit. We had some comfortable times together. I went little out, but to the prayer meetings and class meetings. They were refreshing seasons.

"It pleased God that my mother gathered strength. She had scarcely any fever; her pain was much abated; and as there was a great probability of her doing well eventually, she did not wish me to stay. On Saturday, the 24th, therefore, I left her; and, after spending a day or two at Kirkstall Forge, and at Leeds, I turned my face again toward the great city; and on Saturday, October 6th, reached Fleet-street. Truly I may say, 'Thou, Lord, hast blessed my going out; O bless my coming in!' My journey has been full of mercies. I feel tenderly for my poor mother; but the Lord is so abundantly with her that my sorrow is mixed with joy. At Leeds, &c., I met my dear old Christian friends; and we were refreshed together.

"October 12th.—My mind has in general

been kept in a spirit of praise since my return. I abound in mercies: O that my gratitude did but keep pace with them! I am a helpless worm: Lord, strengthen me! For these two days I have been the Lord's prisoner; but my mind is kept at the Saviour's feet. I feel much respecting public matters: as a nation we are in a perilous state. To whom should we flee for succour, but to thee, O Lord? Do thou undertake for us, and let our enemies be put to confusion!

"November 5th, 1803.—For some days last week, my mind was particularly exercised. Which way soever I looked, nothing but clouds appeared. But God was my refuge; and I found my rest in resignation to his will.

"November 1st, 1804.—It is three years this day since my dear Mr. Mortimer and I took each other by the hand, for better for worse. I then believed our union to be of God; and expected, if spared, that future Providence would manifest to me the completion of it, and show that what on that day took place was in the Divine order. So it has proved. I thank thee, O my most indulgent Lord, for such a kind, tender, affectionate, suitable partner! I thought well of him three years ago; but now we have wintered and summered together, I see that I knew but little of his real worth. He bears with all my weaknesses, watches over me in love, and does all he can to promote my usefulness; and our Lord frequently blesses us together, in our social approaches to his throne.

"Soon after I had written the above paragraph, dated November 5th, 1803, it pleased my Lord to permit me to enter into a painful furnace; but he was with me, and all was well. I had a violent inflammation in my left eye. It terminated in a collection of matter in the ball of the eye. Mr. Ware, an eminent oculist, used various means to absorb it; but nothing would do, short of a surgical operation. This was to me a bitter cup; but my Lord helped me to drink it. The cornea was cut; and though I suffered from blisters, bleeding, much fever, and extreme weakness, yet such was the Divine support afforded to me that, if I could not have had the consolation without the suffering, most willingly would I undergo the one to enjoy the other. My dear Mr. Mortimer was kindness itself; and though I was nearly three months a prisoner, yet my mercies were such as generally preserved me in the spirit of praise to my compassionate Lord and Saviour. I expected the loss of my eye; but in this my Lord has dealt with me according to his wonted goodness: the sight was much impaired, but it has been mending slowly for some time, and is now far better than I ever expected it to be, though I do not suppose it will ever be as usual. But I have one good eye; and if the eyes of my understanding are but more fully opened, I shall do well.

"This day's post brought me tidings of the translation of my very dear, my faithful, my beloved friend, Mrs. Crosby, to the kingdom of glory. She was remarkably happy all last week; met her class as usual; was at chapel on the Sunday, and in glory before eight o'clock in the evening. I had a sweet letter from her about a fortnight ago: she said she thought it would be her last: so it has proved. I have lost a friend who, with more than a mother's care, watched over me from the time of my first setting out in the heavenly race. Our souls were knit together in bonds which death cannot dissolve. My loss is great: I loved her tenderly. Lord, help me to strive to follow my friend to glory!—She was a burning and a shining light. Her life, and her death, glorified God. I prayed for a blessing on her poor afflicted friend, Miss T.; and was so impressed with a sense of my Saviour's love to her, that it was as if he had said to my heart, 'Around and beneath her are the everlasting arms.'

"November 8th.—The Lord keeps my soul in perfect peace. I am deeply sensible of my own nothingness; but my Saviour is all in all. I wrote to dear Miss T.; and though I want more power to improve this affecting bereavement myself, yet I endeavoured to help and comfort her. So it is;—my old friends are taken, and I am left. O that the end for which my Lord spares me may be fully answered!

"November 15th.—My God and Father deals very bountifully with me: I deserve no mercy, and yet he causes my peace to flow as a river. For some days I have enjoyed unutterable peace, and such a sense that from and through my Saviour all my blessings flow, as unites my heart to him in thankful love. May I more deeply feel the obligations I lie under, and sink into the dust before him!

"March, 1805.—Numberless are thy mercies, O my Lord! All thy dispensations toward me manifest grace and love, without measure or end. For some weeks I have felt a growing sense of my own helplessness; but have been permitted to come to Christ just as I am. I see, I feel, that in him all fulness dwells. Jesus is the Divine repository for his Church, and the believing soul receives its all from him. He is my prevailing High Priest before the throne; and his promises greatly encourage me to come to him with humble confidence, for the supply of all my wants.

"December 14th, 1806.—God is love. He deals very bountifully with a poor worm. Since I last recorded his mercies, my mind has often been very much tried. Satan has assaulted me with many fiery darts, but the Lord has graciously lifted up a standard against him. Still I live to praise redeeming love, and my soul is kept through my Saviour's power. My family mercies are great. It has pleased the Lord to call our eldest daughter to seek his face. Her heart has obeyed the call; and, after seeking for some time, the Lord has manifested his pardoning love to her soul. She is a pleasant companion to me: I know not how to be thankful enough. Our third son, George, is a young man truly devoted to God. He is bent on the ministry, and we dare not thwart him; because young men whose minds are so influenced by Divine truth, as his has been for some time, are the fittest subjects for the sacred office. He is now entered at Queen's College, Cambridge; and I trust will be a comfort to us, and a blessing to many, on a future day.

"February 8th, 1807.—My cup is filled with blessings. This year I have enjoyed peace within; and multiplied mercies have been profusely showered down upon me. A week ago I walked to town, and was well in body, and happy in mind. I called to see a sick person; and, coming down stairs, (it being very dark,) I fell, and sadly sprained my foot; but, I thank God, no bone was broken. I have been confined ever since; but I see so much mercy in the whole affair, that it has afforded me matter for praise. My mind is kept 'looking to Jesus;' he is 'full for all of truth and grace.' Yes, full, even for me!

"February 3rd, 1811.—Yesterday I entered my fifty-eighth year. It was a day of humiliation and comfort. While reflecting on the forbearance and mercy exercised toward me, my heart was penetrated with thankfulness to the God of infinite love. I am unworthy of the least of his benefits, and yet he pours upon me the choicest favours. For, in the midst of kind friends, and all that this world can give, my soul seeks and finds its happiness in communion with himself. The streams lead to the fountain. To-day I felt near access to the source of bliss, while at the table of the Lord. By faith I was enabled to realize my acceptance with the Father, through the sprinkled blood; and waited the fulfilment of the promise which invites to more abundant life, through him who came to save a world of sinners. Amem. Amen. Even so, my Lord!"

An interval of six years elapsed before Mrs. Mortimer committed to writing any farther record of her internal or external circumstances. Her correspondence with her friends will, in the mean time, supply some interesting notices of the direction in which the stream of life proceeded in its progress toward eternity.

The loss of friends, one of the deepest and bitterest springs of human sorrow, is the allotted portion of mortality; and those who are most highly favoured in the possession of earth's best but most precarious treasures, must pay the price of their enjoyment in the pangs of separation, when the whirlwind and the fiery chariot come to sever from them those with whom, in sweet companionship, they have pursued their journey through the vale of life.

Mrs. Mortimer lived long enough to drop the far greater number of her early associates by the way. Among those who, at this time, made their escape from the perils of the wilderness, was the devoted Lady Maxwell; of whose death some interesting particulars are given in the following letter from her ladyship's friend and relative, Miss Napier :—

"*Edinburgh, July* 14*th*, 1810.

"Lady Maxwell died on the 2nd instant. Her health had declined since November. Three of the most eminent physicians attended her, who apprehended no danger till within six weeks of her death. She died, blessed woman! as she lived, rejoicing in the God of her salvation, and in the full prospect of eternal happiness! She was quite aware of her situation, and told me, from the time she was taken, that 'death was in the cup;' but, out of tenderness to me, she never touched on the subject till within a fortnight of her death ; and from that time till she departed, her conversation was more like that of an inhabitant of heaven than of a terrestrial being. She expired without a sigh, struggle, or groan ; which was literally an answer to prayer. I had long been her set lected and confidential friend, as well as her relation, and had lived under her roof with her for several years ; so that to me this event is most mournful. But I am sensible that the change to her is so glorious, that I ought to turn my tears into hymns of joy. I endeavour to comfort myself by not losing sight of what she is enjoying. I doubt not but many hymns were sung on her entrance into her heavenly Father's kingdom ; and that a host of angels conducted her to her King, her Saviour, and her God. Then, then began the glory! She, being crowned with honour and immortality, is received at God's right hand, to drink of pleasures for evermore. I must remember, too, the many, many mercies with which this bitter cup is mingled: she did not outlive her usefulness; her faculties were unimpaired, and she went to receive her unspeakable reward before the days of old age arrived, in which she would have found no pleasure. Her life and death are lessons which, I trust, I shall never forget: may they be blessed to me, and to all who knew or were connected with her; and may we more and more strive to walk, at an humble distance, in her steps, that our last end may be like hers!

"God highly honoured me in appointing me to the melancholy duty of attending her. Such a deathbed! It appeared like the verge of heaven; like waiting in the sanctuary, surrounded by angels and archangels; and above all, a place which the presence of God rendered sacred. There was never greater lamentation than has been made for her by all ranks of society. There was a funeral sermon preached on the occasion of her death, on Sunday evening, in her free school; where she had educated nearly eight hundred children, who receive a regular course of education for three years; and, when dismissed and fully taught, each gets a Bible. This school, by her settlement, is to exist while time shall last. There is to be a funeral sermon also in the church, on the same affecting subject, to-morrow."*

If a death of dread and terror argues a "monstrous life," does not one so lucid, and so glorious, speak the design of life accomplished, and impress the seal of Heaven upon a course of piety and virtue, to give efficacy to example, and to stimulate survivors to pursue with holy zeal and diligence the same safe and honourable path?

In the year 1814, a scene of domestic affliction and bereavement engrossed the solicitude of Mrs. Mortimer and her family: it was the sickness and death of her youngest son, who was attacked with a pulmonary disease, which issued in consumption; and in a few months removed him, at the age of sixteen, into the eternal world. This painful dispensation was, however, mercifully alleviated by the grace with which it was accompanied, and through which it was sanctified to the final salvation of the youthful sufferer. His mother's conversation, prayers, and counsels were greatly blessed to him. He called to mind the early visitations of the Spirit, and was humbled at the recollection of his own unfaithfulness; ingenuously confessing that, through trifling with conviction and neglect of prayer, those first impressions were effaced, and now his heart was hard.

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* For full information respecting Lady Maxwell, see her ladyship's Life and Correspondence, by the Rev. T. Lancaster.

In a letter to Mr. George Mortimer, in which Mrs. Mortimer details at length the physical and mental circumstances of the afflicted youth, she says,—

"During weeks of slowly-wasting sickness, we read the Scriptures and prayed with him daily. The Spirit of interceding faith was given; and, though in general he spoke but little, yet there were times when he blamed himself much for the nonimprovement of the opportunities he had enjoyed. We thought it our duty to tell him plainly, though affectionately, of his danger; and advised him, as a perishing sinner, to fly to Christ; adding, 'If our Lord pardon your sins, and take you to glory, you will be happy for ever;' to which he replied, 'I have no right ideas of the happiness of heaven, nor have I ever thought much about it; but I have thought often of the happiness and comfort which religious people enjoy here: they are the only happy people; and I have always intended to become one of them, some time or other; but so many things have hindered, that it was always deferred till another day.' At other times he would say, 'I know I am lost without a Saviour; but my heart is hard: I cannot pray, or keep my mind fixed on a subject for any length of time.' Being told that 'God is rich in mercy,' that he will cast out none that come to him; and exhorted to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that he might be saved; he replied, 'I do believe the

Scriptures to be true, and that Jesus Christ died for sinners; yet I do not feel the effects of this believing which you say I ought to feel.' We then endeavoured to explain to him the difference between historical faith, and that which the Holy Spirit works in the heart of a penitent sinner, who cries to God for help; and prayed that our Lord would explain it to his heart by blessed experience. One day, Dr. Steinkopff favoured us with a call: he most affectionately encouraged our poor sufferer to come to Jesus; particularly by dwelling on these words, 'Call on me in the day of trouble,' &c. James was much affected, both while he spoke and prayed; and, though he said little at the time, yet it was evident that a powerful impression was made on his mind. He now deeply felt his need of a Saviour, and was, at length, enabled to 'flee for refuge to take hold on the hope set before him.' "

The faith and prayers of his anxious friends were, at length, most blessedly met and answered; and the concluding scene was crowned with gracious tokens of His presence who alone can open springs of consolation in the dreary vale of death.

The last period of his affliction is thus described by Mrs. Mortimer:—" His sufferings at this time were great; but he was thankful for every thing his sisters or the servants did for him, and often expressed his gratitude. On the two days preceding his decease he seldom spoke; and his bodily weakness was such, that it seemed scarcely possible the immortal spark even if Divinely influenced, would have power to declare the loving-kindness of God. We often said, 'The body is dead because of sin; O let the spirit live because of righteousness!' and still, like the man sick of the palsy, we continued laying him at the Saviour's feet.

"About three in the morning of the day on which he died, his sister Mary (who with a servant was watching with him) came into my room, and said, 'There is an alteration in James; I wish you would come in.' I went immediately, and a more solemn scene I never witnessed. Our poor dear child appeared to be dying: for some time we knelt in silent prayer around his bed: in about half an hour he revived a little, and asked, 'Is any body here?' I replied, 'Your mother, sister Mary, and Kitty, and our precious Saviour is here to help you.' Our Lord then unloosed the stammerer's tongue; he cried out, in broken accents, as his breath was almost gone, 'Lord, help me!—O God, have mercy!—O God, in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand'—I added, 'are pleasures for evermore.' He took up the word, and continued, 'for ever—for ever—for ever—praise!' One began to repeat that hymn,

'O for a thousand tongues to sing.'

He went on, as well as his almost exhausted breath would permit,—

'My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace.'

"In these and similar broken accents, many of which we could scarcely understand, was our dying child permitted, for about forty minutes, to add his testimony to the faithfulness of our promise-keeping Jehovah. We stood on holy ground: surely, had an infidel been present in these sacred moments, he must have acknowledged the efficacy of Divine teaching; and that the Gospel, embraced by faith, affords that comfort in a dying hour, which raises the soul above the worn-out body, and opens the kingdom of an inward heaven.

"He then lay about half an hour without speaking; and, at ten minutes before five, as a fresh trophy of our Redeemer's power to save, was permitted to enter into his Master's joy, aged sixteen years and twenty days. We feel ourselves laid under fresh obligations to trust and praise our gracious Lord, for this signal instance of his goodness and mercy. He has heard and answered prayer beyond our expectations. He is faithful. O that we may trust him, and praise him, until we see his face without a veil between!"

Others of her family Mrs. Mortimer has previously noticed, in whom she found cause for the greatest thankfulness, as described in the preceding narrative, on account of their decided choice of that religion whose "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace." In the case of this youth she had the satisfaction to see her prayerful and affectionate solicitude rendered, through the Divine blessing, effectual to his conversion, to the preparation of the spirit for its conflict with the final enemy, and for a happy and triumphant entrance into his Redeemer's joy.

In the spring of the following year, another golden link was wrenched from the chain of her early friendships. The sad catastrophe of the death of the amiable, pious, and affectionate Lady Mary Fitzgerald was communicated to Mrs. Mortimer, in the following letter from her friend, John Pearson, Esq., surgeon :—

"*Golden Square, Sunday, April 9th,* 1815.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—I do not know whether you have heard that the warfare of our dear, invaluable friend Lady Mary Fitzgerald is ended, and that she has entered into the joy of her Lord. That such an event should have taken place, at her advanced period of life, was to be expected ; but the manner and circumstances of her departure were most mournful and calamitous. She was burned to death by her gown taking fire, last night between nine and ten o'clock. I saw her before eleven, but she had then no pulse ; and from the extent of the injury I could form no reasonable expectation of her surviving. She died about six o'clock this morning. I hope that she did not suffer much pain, the magnitude of the injury destroying the acuteness of the sensations; and I administered wine and laudanum in such quantities as greatly to mitigate her sufferings, without impairing the powers of her understanding. The perpetual state of inquietness in which she continued did not permit much to be said; but she exhibited the same kind, gentle, affectionate spirit which predominated in all her conduct. Lord and Lady Liverpool, General Phipps, and Mr. and Mrs. Augustus Phipps, were with her till a short time before her departure.

"Although we must feel the loss of so excellent a lady, and so bright an example of what Christianity was in its best days, yet we cannot greatly mourn, that she has exchanged a state of imperfection for a crown of glory; a world from which her heart had long been weaned, for the presence of her dearest Saviour, and the possession of a heavenly inheritance. She was an incarnate angel; and she is now a glorified spirit, partaking of the fulness of that blessedness of which she had been favoured with so many foretastes. May we, my dear madam, be 'followers of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.' You have happily retreated from the hurry and business of the world, to converse with God in retirement and peace: pray for those who are so merged in earthly concerns, that they can seldom surmount the oppressive burthen, to respire a purer element. None will be more thankful for your remembrance of him at those sacred seasons than, my dear madam, your faithful and affectionate friend,

"JOHN PEARSON."

A monumental tablet, to the memory of this excellent lady, was soon afterward erected in the Wesleyan chapel, City-Road, which bears the following inscription:—

IN MEMORY
of the
Right Honourable Lady MARY FITZGERALD,
Daughter of John, Lord HERVEY,
Grand-daughter of John, Earl of Bristol,
and
Widow of GEORGE FITZGERALD, Esq.
She was
Born on the 31st day of October, 1725,
and
Closed an exemplary and religious life,
On the 9th day of April, 1815.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth."

This Monument was erected,
As a tribute of affection and veneration,
By her Grand-son,
Lieutenant-colonel THOMAS GEORGE FITZGERALD.

Perhaps more judicious and important observations on this painful and appalling event will not readily occur, than those offered to Mrs. Mortimer, by her friend Mrs. Bates:—

"Mr. Wilson informed me of Lady Mary's happy departure, for such we must term it;

and I call to mind what my dear husband sometimes took occasion to inculcate, namely, the duty of distinguishing between things as they really are, and the stroke they make on our imaginations. A fever of some days' continuance, ending in death, would appear to us a natural event; and though the suffering would have been more, the impression would have been less. I do not, however, wonder at your feeling from the suddenness of the call which broke the visible tie of so long a friendship.

"Permit me to add, what has just struck me as a consolatory thought concerning the means of this excellent lady's removal. She is so universally known, that her death and its circumstances will be much spoken of, and may prove the means of saving more than one person's life. This *we* shall not know: but that is no reason why it should be hidden from the inhabitants of paradise; who doubtless are instructed in many things relative to this world which to us would not be suitable. And therefore, some time hence, dear Lady Mary, in addition to other motives and causes of thanksgiving, may be enabled to present very delightful acknowledgments for the favour of being made useful, even in the mode of her death; which will then, in such case, appear to her as particularly suited to the benevolence of mind which she had, through grace, exercised during life.

"I think Mr. Mortimer sees, as every body does who has seen somewhat of this world, that it is a special privilege to be of any use in it.

To do mischief, to do much that comes to nothing,—this is common and easy. We may run in circles, and think we move; but we move and make no progress. Persons unknown, much in prayer, self-denial, and contrition, may do more than many out-door labourers. It is common for the people of the world to talk about doing good, as if it was something ready at hand, which they could set about whenever they had leisure and inclination, at least with the help of a little money, which, being the sinews of worldly activity, they suppose can do any thing. Whereas, it cannot be too often inculcated, that, without leave from Him who alone introduces good of any kind into the present state, they may throw about money, and run to and fro, and after all increase nothing but confusion and mischief. But 'He giveth his beloved,' we say, 'sleep:' (Psalm cxxvii. 2:) I should say, 'the double portion;' that is, the portion of the first-born, thus enabling and permitting him to help his brethren. But this is a matter of favour, to be sought for, and received, and used as such, or else it will soon be forfeited."

Extracts from several other letters received by Mrs. Mortimer, from this intelligent lady, may here, with propriety, be introduced:—

"I returned to Mr. P. the third volume of Barruel. It is not a book one would wish to buy, and yet one might desire to read it. A single reading is enough; for we wish not too often or too long to contemplate evil. But evil is the ground of prayer, and therefore must be known, to be prayed against.

"All burthens are laid on Mrs. H. It is a great and special favour to be able to keep clear of any which are not the burthens of duty. I cannot think the latter are really oppressive. I suppose they rather tend to keep those persons steady in the right path who bear them properly: it is true, they may feel them heavy, but they do not stop them on their road. May we not judge it lawful to endeavour to cast off all those that do? I am inclined to think that our popular doctrines respecting trials and sufferings want revising. Truth and error are mingled in them, and the truths have preserved the errors. I suspect that there is a property of error which renders the coalition dangerous; namely, that insensibly it corrodes the truth as rust does metals, changing that part to which it adheres into its own nature, or, in other words, destroying it; for error, strictly speaking, has no substance.

"I have already been making some arrangements with the pleasing idea of your seeing them next year. We are permitted to make little perspectives, if they are but parts of the beautiful whole promised under the name of 'an inheritance.'

"My visit to London was a period of some value to myself, being rich in mercies and instruction. I feel desirous, as people are in the evening of the day, to make use of all the day light. Time appears to me more than ever valuable. The house in which my spirit dwells will swiftly and perceptibly get out of repair by reason of age: both labour and rest will be impeded by infirmity; and I expect more and more to feel that when the mind would apply to thought, and the heart to feeling, the body will say, 'Some of my tools are broken, others are blunted, and I am tired.' O what pity that strength of thought or feeling should, in the days of youth, flow away in vanity! What a loss of happiness, as well as profit! I am persuaded a day of trial is coming on the Church. Some views deepen in my mind: they have been long forming, and have arisen gradually, and almost imperceptibly to myself, from being for many years chiefly engaged with the Scriptures, and reading little of other books.

"It may be admitted as an axiom, that every soul reflects the glory it receives, if (that is, while) it remains faithful. For if it absorbs the glory, it appropriates that which no creature can, with impunity, make its own. And here I may be permitted to say, that some, like the apostles, are lights of the world; others, lights of different Churches, of nations, of cities, of villages, of families. Yet herein, who occupies such and such a province, or situation, we are incompetent judges. It may be, that some burning light, hidden by providential circumstances from men, may (bear with the word) illuminate angels! They, as God's servants, ministering in his kingdom, must have their helps to progress, as a reward, at least, of love, though not of probation.

"If it was Messiah's meat and drink to do his Father's will, and if it is that of the holy angels to do it, as manifested to them by him, surely the reflections of his glory are a light in which they rejoice! The phrase, 'from glory to glory,' conveys a delightful expression of the increasing approbation wherewith souls are beheld in their progressive assimilation to Him who is the only authorized 'image of God,' and in whom the full delight and complacency of the Tri-une Deity rest by ineffable union. This surely was an eminent part of the joy set before the Saviour, that he might render the creatures of God objects of Divine complacency, and present the creation, as well as his own sacrifice, 'holy, acceptable to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.' I wish you to take up the subject for meditation. St. Paul, in Ephesians v, gives us full authority so to do. Artfully has a veil been woven by evil spirits to obscure this glory. They have woven it for the use of the Church."

This correspondence exhibits such a combination of spiritual and intellectual vigour, that it must afford pleasure and instruction to every Christian mind.

An extract from a letter, addressed to Mrs. Mortimer, by her valuable and highly-esteemed friend, Miss Sarah Wesley, daughter of the Rev. Charles Wesley, will also be found peculiarly interesting; not only as an expression of enlightened individual sentiment, upon a subject of very considerable importance, and as an exemplary exhibition of the wise and salutary influence of strict parental discipline; but, in these days of slanderous insinuations, as a valid and authentic document, of authority sufficient to refute invidious calumny in its vain endeavours to asperse the memory of the sainted dead.* To Mr. Charles Wesley, the brother and the coadjutor of the venerable Founder of Methodism, the religious world at large is too much indebted, for his inimitable Christian psalmody, as well as for his arduous, extensive,

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* The unfounded slander to which the author here refers, imputed to Mr. Charles Wesley the incredible inconsistency of having sanctioned his two sons, justly celebrated for the early development of their eminent musical talents, in giving private concerts at his house on Sunday evenings. That the Christian Sabbath was never so shamefully desecrated at the house of this venerable minister, there is abundant proof. The calumny has in some quarters been supposed to have been repeated by Cowper, in his "Progress of Error;" and the severe reproof which he there administers to a "fiddling priest," whom he introduces in that poem under the name of "Occiduus," has been applied to Mr. C. Wesley. The facts, or supposed facts, on which the poet really grounded his strictures, are stated at some length in a letter from him to Mr. Newton, lately published in the first volume of Cowper's Life and Works, edited by the Rev. T. S. Grimshawe; in which Lady Austen is mentioned as the authority on which they rested. That some popular divine of that day was guilty of the crime imputed, is not unlikely; but that the brother of the Founder of Methodism was the individual intended by the appellative, "Occiduus," is an assumption which seems to have been much too hastily adopted. Such an application of it is certainly at variance with the whole character of Mr. C. Wesley; and there are several parts of the description of Occiduus, both in the poem and in the letter, which could not by possibility have any reference to him, ex-

cept on the hypothesis of a criminal ignorance, or of a malignity still more censurable. That the enemies of the Wesleys, ever on the watch in that day for the materials of detraction, imagined that Cowper's "Occiduus" was meant to satirize the man whom they unjustly depreciated, and represented his poem as sanctioning their slander, is very likely. If, for a moment, it could be conceded that Cowper himself meant any such application of his sarcasm, or that Lady Austen did really affirm of Mr. C. Wesley what the poet represents her to Mr. Newton as having affirmed concerning the fashionable and hypocritical Occiduus, or that, with any such understanding of her allusion, the reverend and highly-respectable editor of the Works and Life could permit himself to give renewed currency to the imputation, no language could be too severe to mark such flagrant violations of truth and charity. The whole rests, even in that case, on the gossip of the day, and on the individual authority of Lady Austen; and is so perfectly contradictory to the weight of evidence in the opposite scale, that from obstinate ignorance or inveterate prejudice alone can it hope to receive either entertainment or respect. There is in righteousness and holiness an inherent moral power, infused into it by Heaven; through the energy of which it repels and surmounts the impotent assaults of detraction and envy; and to this power, in the present instance, the appeal might be safely made. But, more direct and immediate testimony is within the reach of those who rather "rejoice in the truth," than in the dissemination of calumnious reports against holy and honourable men. In addition to the decisive testimony of Mr. Charles Wesley's own family, and friends, who had the means of knowing perfectly both his sentiments and his conduct, in regard to the subject and successful ministerial labours, not to feel an interest in ascertaining the purity and integrity of the principles and the spirit by which he was actuated in social and domestic life.

now under consideration, he himself may be also summoned in evidence. The light in which he regarded all theatrical exhibitions, and places of public amusement, Ranelagh and Vauxhall Gardens especially, may be learned from one of his hymns, written to be used in public worship, and often, during his life, sung by crowded congregations. The peculiar service for which it was composed, is called a "watch night;" one which, although well known to *primitive Christianity*, is in its present observance, nearly confined to that connection to which he belonged; of which he was not only a distinguished ornament, but which he eminently contributed to establish. The whole hymn is entirely to the purpose; but it is too long to be inserted here. Its immediate subject is, the contrast between a religious assembly, for the purpose of solemn midnight worship, and those worldly, vain, and dangerous associations, to which he has been falsely charged with giving his sanction and encouragement. To the influence of the "god of this world" he ascribes all these delusive and vicious pleasures, and, in the fourth verse, thus expresses himself:—

"The civiller crowd,
In theatres proud,
Acknowledge his power,
And Satan in nightly assemblies adore.
To the masque and the ball
They fly at his call;
Or in pleasures excel;
And chant in a grove* to the harpers of hell."

That in the teeth of a judgment so solemnly, strenuously, and authoritatively given to the Church, and to

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* "Ranelagh Gardens, Vauxhall, &c."—This note is appended to the hymn in Mr. Wesley's collection.

On the subject of Miss Wesley's communication to her friend,—in spite of his own energetically-expressed sentiments, the evidence of a godly and devoted life, and the testimony of his personal friends, of their connections, and of the members of his own family, all strongly contradictory of a weak, ill-authenticated, and iniquitous slander,—his conduct has been uncharitably impugned. This circumstance stamps peculiar value on the indubitable testimony of a witness, not subpœnaed for the occasion, but whose evidence was long since spontaneously afforded in reference to other ends and purposes, and who was herself the subject of those kind and wise restrictions, which she here so gratefully and so judiciously commends. The letter bears no farther date than April 18th; but, from internal circumstances, it appears to have been written about the period at which it is here introduced. Miss Wesley says,—

"It is difficult to preserve young people from dissipation when they have fashionable connections; and this is a reason for the seclusion

the world, any man, possessing even a common, much less a *Wesleyan*, share of intellect, should have committed himself to such conduct, or such counsels, as are laid to the charge of the person designated "Occiduus," by Lady Austen, is too incongruous to obtain credence from consistent and reflecting minds. The fair and charitable inference from the whole is, that Mr. C. Wesley was *not* the person intended in the description of Occiduus. The tale respecting Sunday concerts is also contradicted, upon the competent and undeniable evidence of his family and connections.

practised by the Moravians. The Methodists have less of it, not only because they are a more numerous body, but from more expanded principles. Yet I have seen and felt the evil of extensive intercourse; and have been tempted to wish that I had been bred in a settlement of the retired pious.

"Your daughters have high privileges, and seem to value them. Your circle is without shares; but they must know more of the evils of life, fully to comprehend their happiness. Poor Hannah More would never have encountered the persecutions and calumnies, which are pointedly revived in a review of her last work, if she had not once lived among the players. How much do I owe to my dear father for checking my theatrical taste when I was a child, and evincing to me his heart's sorrow, on seeing my desire to go to such exhibitions! This is the chief part of my youth which I recollect with delight; for I obeyed him, without conceiving the evils of a playhouse, and left my drama unfinished, which I began to write at eleven years of age."

The testimony of another member of Mr. Charles Wesley's family (his son Samuel) strongly corroborates the above satisfactory statement. In a letter, dated January, 1797, speaking of his early years, he says, "We were kept closely at home, that we might escape the corruptions of the world. Lord Mornington, who was a passionate lover of music, said, we had no occasion to go into the world, for the world would come to us."

To rescue a venerable and widely-influential name from the imputation of having, either by connivance or by sanction, given encouragement to the sinful pleasures of a misguided, unreflecting, wicked world, is not irrelevant to the important object of the present work. And to bear a direct and decisive testimony against the magnitude of error and of evil, implied in the attempt to desecrate religion by amalgamation with the trifling, turbid, low, licentious recreations of unhallowed minds, is strictly consonant with its avowed design. A vacillating state of mind, on subjects of this nature, has weakened many a holy purpose, and seduced the half-emancipated spirit back again into the toils of sin. Youth and inexperience, influenced by ill-directed counsel, warped by bad example, or beguiled, like Eve, through vain and curious eagerness to know the nature and the curse of evil by the loss of good, may imagine fondly, that to tread the precincts of destruction, and then retrace their steps in safety, involves no arduous, no uncommon task. But let them learn, by the myriads who have preceded them and failed in the perilous attempt, that it is dangerous to make an experiment in which they are sure to suffer loss, should they even escape with life. Some, indeed, who would not, without much compunction, violate a strict, express command of God, yet, being feeble and of undecided purpose, endeavour to restrain the accusations of an unapproving conscience, by the fallacy,—that no explicit prohibition of such pleasures and indulgences is found in Holy Writ. In this, as in a thousand other instances, the judgment is perverted by depraved affections and a wayward will. To the upright mind it cannot fail to be perceptible as is the light of heaven, that in the Scriptures are contained those *principles* which are to regulate, in detail, every motion of the heart, as well as the whole course of conduct, and the habitual practice of the life. These, by the truly humble and inquiring spirit, will be diligently sought for, understood, embraced, and loved. Then, when the eye is single, the path of duty will be clearly seen: The conscience, tender and enlightened, will shrink instinctively from contact with temptation; and the "narrow way," in preference chosen, and pursued with steadfast and uncompromising perseverance, will be found to yield at present such pure and elevated pleasures as God's holy word will sanction, and a regenerated heart and mind approve: while, in the end, it will conduct to that more blessed state of light and glory, where enjoyments, rich and permanent as their exhaustless Fountain, shall refresh and satiate those faithful spirits who, with a noble heroism, ventured to renounce the vanities and follies of the world, that they might seek and find their perfect and supreme felicity in God.

Mrs. Mortimer's letters to her friends, about this period, will be found truly valuable. They not only mark her progress through several subsequent years, but also show that the flame of piety continued to burn with pure and steadfast lustre on the consecrated altar of her meek and loving heart. To her friend, Mrs. J., she writes from

"*Windsor, September* 12*th*, 1815.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—You know that we left home for change of scene and air. My dear Mr. Mortimer needed both; and, I believe, we were directed to the right place. The air is very good, and the walks remarkably fine. Our lodging is near the Long Walk, and within a mile of Frogmore. The trees afford us shade, or the hills prospect, as we are disposed to vary the scene; and it has pleased our Lord to give his blessing; so that I think Mr. Mortimer is as well as I have known him to be for many years. We have enjoyed our little excursion, and hope to return home grateful to God for multiplied mercies. My dear friend, let us look at our blessings: if we were not half asleep, we should be all praise! May he quicken all our drowsy powers! A sense of the Saviour's love is the main spring which sets all other springs in motion; and the blessed promise is, that the Holy Spirit shall take of the things of Christ, and show them to us. This soul-quickening principle will prove a powerful antidote, and it is the only one I know, against the opiates of this life. Without this, lawful things are often hurtful; and for want of it multitudes are totally sunk into, and swallowed up in, the things of time and sense. You, my dear friend, have felt the blessed influence of this love; and why should you not habitually live under it? It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom: press into it, and see that you abide there. Cry mightily to God for an increase of faith; and while so doing, use that power to embrace the promises which you already have. God will then give you his blessing, and you shall see his great salvation."

To the same friend she afterward writes thus:—

"*July* 8*th*, 1816.

"I am glad that though space separates us, we can meet in spirit. Yes, my dear friend, we can meet at His feet in whom all fulness dwells, and dwells for needy, helpless souls, such as you and I. Blessed be God! His ear is open to hear your prayer, to redress your grievances, and to supply your wants. His presence fills all space; and faith finds him every where. May we feel its realizing effects more powerfully! I hope you have more settled weather than we have. Here it is much like April,—heavy showers, and sunny gleams: a just picture of human life: some have all storm; and very few, if any, all sunshine! but, thank God! there is a shelter; a hiding place from the wind: into this may we ever run, and feel rest in resignation to our Father's will! Wishing you all the good the blessing of God can give on the means you now enjoy, I remain

"Most affectionately yours,
"E. Mortimer."

On February 2d, 1817, occurs the last of those memoranda which Mrs. Mortimer occasionally made of the Divine dispensations toward her, whether in providence or in grace. "This day," she says, "I have entered into the sixty-fourth year of my age. My soul, prostrate in the dust, adores and loves the God of all grace. I am still kept a monument of his mercy; he has often led me through the fire, and through the water; but his hand has graciously upheld me, and brought me through unhurt. In August last, I had a nervous fever; brought on, I suppose, by conflict of mind, endured chiefly for a young relative who was apparently near death, and who was totally insensible of his danger: he was delirious, and my feelings on his account were inexpressible. My Lord heard prayer; restored the youth; and by degrees raised me up again. But it was a time of close exercise, and a means of teaching me such lessons of sympathy with people whose nervous system is at all unstrung, as I never was capable of before. I am wonderfully recovered; and while to-day looking back on what my Lord had led me through, I was deeply humbled. Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days; and though the last has been a trying year, yet it has been a good one. I feel increasing deadness to the objects of time and sense, and a full determination to live for eternity; but I seem now to have only the shreds of time. Most of my friends and relatives are gone. Dear Mrs. Fletcher, my sister-in-law, and many others, have gained the port. Lord, help me to get fully ready, that, when thou callest, I may give up my accounts with joy!"

In the spirit of these valedictory observations she calmly sunk into the vale of years; yet, at the time when they were written, she retained her various posts of duty, and occupied a foremost place in efforts of benevolence and zeal. Her domestic cares had lessened; and this year a breach was made, which, though conformable to the arrangements of a wise and gracious Providence, was yet acutely felt by the affectionate and happy circle of those on whom the stroke of partial separation fell. The following letter, from Mrs. Mortimer to Mrs. Holland, will explain the whole:—

"*July 24th*, 1817.

"MY DEAR MARY,—Your welcome letter not only reached my hands, but drew from my heart grateful acknowledgments to the God of all our mercies. I rejoice in your comfort; and pray Him who alone can do it, to bless all your blessings, and sanctify every creature enjoyment.

"I can scarcely tell you what we all felt after you left us. We saw the hand of God in your removal, and felt resignation to the Divine will;

but Mr. Holland had made a chasm in our social circle which we deeply felt. Though poor Eliza needed comforting herself, she strove to comfort her parents. The day after you left River-Terrace, she told me, in a kind and affectionate manner, 'Mother, I can never be to my father and you what Mary has been, but I will try to do what I can to fill her place;' and she has fulfilled her promise, beyond our expectations. Blessed be God, we live in peace and love, and the God of love and peace is with us! You are often in our minds, and we are thankful that we can meet before our Father's throne. He is our centre, and the nearer we live to him, the nearer we shall feel to each other. You remember the simile of the circles drawn round the hill: on which side soever we ascend, if we keep ascending we shall get nearer to each other, as we get nearer to the top. I am glad that Mr. Holland and you feel agreed to seek a closer walk with God. Lady Maxwell, in one of her letters, says, 'In secret prayer and meditation I get enlarged views of the salvation of God; and what is thus discovered to me faith goes out after, and according to its strength are its returns. This, my dear Mary, is the way: may the God of love help you to walk in it! Cultivate a life of faith, think much of it, and talk often between yourselves of the objects of faith. Use all the power you now feel, to embrace revealed truth. Love and heavenly mindedness will follow. The Christian only shines by reflection; and therefore, if he would fulfil the character which St. Paul ascribes to him, he must live under the direct influence of the Sun of righteousness. Wherever you are, and whatever you feel, endeavour to learn the happy art of coming to Jesus: he is always waiting, and always willing, to receive you; for with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. His one will toward his creatures is, to save them from their sins, and to raise them out of the ruins of their fall. I am glad that you give us so particular an account of the means of grace which Raithby affords; use them in faith, and you will prosper. We may live to God wherever his providence places us, if it be not our own fault. Large towns have their advantages,—popular preachers, and multiplicity of means; but when too much depended upon, they rather stand in the way of communion with God, than help the souls that are favoured with them into the spirit of simple, humble love. In the country, to a reflecting mind, every thing becomes a preacher. We may learn

From birds, and fruits, and plants, and flowers,
How to employ the happy hours.'

The few and homely means of grace afforded, if used in a right spirit, will send the soul to God in secret; and the lessons learned from the Holy Spirit, upon our knees, are often blessed ones. May my dear Mary, and the partner of her days, learn many of them, daily feeling the truth of that promise, 'All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children!'

"Your father and Eliza join me in kindest love to you both. That the best of blessings may rest on you, my dear Mary, is the prayer of your affectionate mother,

"E. MORTIMER."

The following letter, from Mrs. Dorothea Whitmore, one of Mrs. Mortimer's more recent but highly valuable and distinguished friends, was written on the same occasion, and will evince that kind and Christian sympathy which is an essential property of true friendship:—

"Though scarcely any change, either as to outward circumstances or inward feelings, has taken place in regard to myself, since my last prolix account, yet I know there has been a change in yours; and I desire to assure you that this has not passed by me unfelt and unheeded. While I have given my sincerest prayers and wishes to Mrs. Holland, for as much happiness as the Lord can safely bestow in her new situation; and, above all, that he will render both her natural and acquired endowments, by his grace, eminently useful in his service;—I have, perhaps, felt the more for you, and the rest of the family, upon this occasion, because, from being better able to realize your feelings, I can more fully enter into them. It seemed to me, that while your love for another would lead you to rejoice in thus consigning an object of tender regard to that protection and support which the providence of God peculiarly assigns to the weakness of woman, and while you would also be happy in sending one of your children into a wider range of usefulness in the vineyard of the Lord, you must, at the same time, feel yourself bereaved of a comfort and a prop. I know you would not be pleased, were I to express the sentiments I do most unfeignedly cherish toward you: but you must permit me to say, that I considered how a mother in Israel would feel on such an occasion; and it appeared to me that, called to make a sacrifice of natural feeling, you would do more than sanctify the trial, by making a willing offering of your self-gratification to the Lord, and that you would be led to thank him for having one earthly tie loosened, that your heart might more simply and wholly rest in him. Is not this the great lesson of our lives, and is it not the great object of our Father's dealings with us? Our souls so cleave to the dust; we are so tied down by every feeling and by every passion, because they are directed to earthly objects. These, by the wisdom and love of our God, are sometimes painfully and entirely snapped by death, as the still more sorrowful separation; at others they are slackened by the removal of the object, as the slighter alienation of affection. But, as they have all but one end, so they have but one voice: 'Leave your broken cisterns, and come unto me:' 'He that drinketh of this water shall never thirst.' And yet, my dear madam, when we have heard this voice, and feel persuaded that we believe it, how difficult it is to obey it! How soon does rejoicing in the creature, as well as grieving in the same, convince us how imperfectly we have retained and obeyed the lesson!"

To Mrs. Holland Mrs. Mortimer again writes, on occasion of the death of that eminent Christian and minister, Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., of Raithby-hall, Lincolnshire.

"*August* 17*th*, 1818.

"We learn from Eliza's letter which has just arrived, that dear Mr. Brackenbury has exchanged mortality for life. This accounts for our feelings: in the middle of last week we seemed to lose our power to pray for the dear sufferer; our prayers had no wings except those for Mrs. Brackenbury.

"On Friday, when the news arrived, emotions, strangely mingled, filled my mind. I felt thankfulness that an old friend, whom I have known between forty and fifty years, had reached the summit of his wishes, and was now permitted to enjoy the full fruition of God; and tender sympathy with dear Mrs. Brackenbury. The loss she mourns is no common loss: Mr. Brackenbury was a tall cedar in the Church, and many sheltered under his spreading branches. I feel for the Church at large, the neighbourhood, the village, which was honoured with such a head; and particularly for dear Mrs. Brackenbury. May the Lord pour out his Spirit upon you all, and sanctify this bereavement! Yesterday my spirit was much at Raithby. I seemed with you in all the means of grace; and as it was such a Sabbath as had never been known there before, I could not help praying that all might profit by the awful solemnity which the circumstances of the hall would diffuse among you. I feel those words of Dr. Young:—

'What means this transportation of my friends?
It bids me love the place where now they dwell,
And scorn this wretched spot they leave so poor.'

"Give our sympathizing love to Mrs. Brackenbury. May our Lord pour into her bleeding heart the oil and wine of his precious love! Nothing but more of God can soothe her sorrow, or fill the vacuum she feels. Religion was never designed to make us stoics, but it was intended to sanctify and regulate all our feelings; and I have no doubt but he who has mixed this painful cup will ultimately bless it to her lasting good.

"Your father, through mercy, is a little better; but the numbness in his limbs continues much the same. Give your little Henry a kiss for me; and believe me, my dear Mary, yours most affectionately, E. MORTIMER."

The unfavourable state of Mr. Mortimer's health, of which an intimation is given in the preceding letter, was but the prelude to still increasing infirmity; and Mrs. Mortimer herself was shortly called to endure the same pang of bereavement, under the anguish of which she there attempts to console and soothe the spirit of her mourning friend. Although not entirely laid aside from public engagements, or occasional intercourse with friends, Mr. Mortimer was evidently incapable of effort, and preferred the seclusion of his private chamber to constant association even with the domestic circle. He enjoyed, in this retirement, favourable opportunities for prayer, reading, and meditation on the Holy Scriptures, which appeared to be his favourite occupation. Thus girding up the loins of his mind, and trimming his lamp, he awaited the approach of the Bridegroom; and happy was it for him that he had been so employed, for the cry came suddenly, "Go ye forth to meet him!"

On Monday evening, March 22d, 1819, a friend, in whose society he was wont to express his pleasure, called to inquire after his health. Mr. Mortimer received him with warm affection; and said, that on that day he had felt himself better than usual, and had enjoyed a walk in his garden. For about an hour he conversed with cheerfulness and freedom. His friend then retired, but had scarcely left the house, when the angel of death entered, and very shortly executed his commission.

"About eight years ago," says Mrs. Mortimer, in an obituary of her late husband, inserted in the Wesleyan Magazine, for the year 1819, "my dear Mr. Mortimer had a severe and long illness. Since that time he never fully recovered his health; but, for the two or three last years, was gradually declining, and often talked familiarly of death. Sometimes he enjoyed sweet peace; at other times he was severely tried. But he was a man of prayer, his Bible was his support, and his God his refuge. Often has he come out of his closet with a countenance irradiated by the consolation with which his mind had been favoured; and his family can testify that the effects were felt by all around him. About a month before his death, his medical friends expressed their fears as to the result of present symptoms: he received their report with perfect calmness, and often said to me, 'You may do so, or so, after I am gone;' but, as he had been in the habit of speaking thus, I did not apprehend that the awful hour of my present bereavement was so near. On Sunday, the 21st, I said, 'What shall I read to you?' He fixed on a sermon from this text, 'What shall I do to be saved?' and the following clause. He enjoyed it much, and wept tears of affectionate love and gratitude. On Monday morning he prayed with his family; seemed better than usual; was cheerful, placid, and particularly kind; took his food as usual; and walked twice round the garden. About seven o'clock in the evening, while sitting in his chair, Mr. Mortimer reached out his hand, and said, 'Help me! help me!' I immediately went to afford him all the assistance in my power, but it was too late; he only added, 'Let me lie down.' We laid him on the sofa: he spoke no more; but, at half-past nine, without a struggle or a groan, his spirit took its flight to the regions of bliss, and left us like persons in a dream; for, though I had long anticipated the painful hour, it came at last so suddenly, that all I could do was to say, 'Lord, help me! Thou hast mixed this bitter cup: sanctify it to my future good; and help me to get fully ready to meet those that are now before the throne! Amen, amen.'"

The affectionate attentions of pious and sympathizing friends, are, perhaps, the only earthly alleviations that the desolated spirit, under such circumstances, can receive; nor indeed, is it always greatly susceptible even of these, until that voice which said to the tumultuous waters, "Peace, be still!" shall, in some measure, have subdued the agony of grief. But He who comforteth the mourners, and listens to the cry of distress from the burthened and sorrowful spirit, at what time the storm falls upon it,—He vouchsafed to impart those consolations which flow immediately from himself, and to prepare for her those secondary ones which the tenderness of friendship is so peculiarly adapted to supply.

Mrs. Mortimer was surrounded by those who loved and reverenced her; and, on this occasion, she shared largely in their sympathy. A gracious Providence had made ample provision for the respectability and comfort of her declining years; and she continued still to occupy a wide sphere of influence and usefulness, with as much activity as advancing years would admit, with comfort to herself, and general interest to the circle of her friends. Nor did that God whom she had chosen as her portion in the morning of her days, now leave her without soothing tokens of his presence, while the shadows of the evening were descending on her solitary path.

Among her letters of condolence, on this affecting subject, is found the following, from her excellent and valued friend, John Pearson, Esq :—

"*London, April* 14*th*, 1819.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—I will not seem to offer an apology for this delay, by telling you how much and how often I have thought of you since your late domestic affliction was known to me ; nor will I enlarge on the ravages death has made in the small circle of my own friends, within the last four or five weeks. Those who live long must expect such bereavements, and not be surprised at finding themselves almost solitary, in a world of strangers. You were not unprepared for the mournful event with which it has pleased God to visit you ; and you have a sure and all-sufficient refuge in the favour and presence of Him who can calm the emotions of grief, and wipe away all tears from the eyes. The condolence and sympathy of a fellow pilgrim may be grateful, as expressing love to yourself, and exemplifying a Christian duty; but the faith of a Christian ascends to higher sources of consolation, and, in meek submission to the Divine will, finds composure and peace amidst sickness and sorrow, privations, and the inroads of death;—inestimable privileges, conferred by our gracious Redeemer, who, by his death and passion, has taken away the sting of the last enemy, and made the grave one of the gates of heaven, and an entrance into supreme glory and blessedness. May it please our heavenly Father to cause the riches of his grace to descend and abide upon you, and 'fill you with all joy and peace in believing, and make you to abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Ghost.' You have heard, I presume, of the departure of our dear and valuable friend Mr. Hey.* The messenger of death smote him in the exercise of his professional duty at Otley. He was almost conscious of it at the time, and survived the stroke about ten days. His disorder was attended with great languor and feebleness, and occasional delirium; so that he was little capable of conversing with his family and friends. But what he did say, implied entire resignation to the will of God, a firm trust and confidence in the merits and intercession of his Saviour, and love and thankfulness to all around him. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord!' What a numerous society of friends have we in the regions of eternal life, and light, and joy! If a mere philosopher could console himself under the prospect of dissolution, by considering the happiness that might be enjoyed from admission into the company of Socrates and Plato, of Scipio and Tully, and others; with what superior advantage does the Christian anticipate the period when he shall arrive at the assembly of the Church of the first-born, and be introduced to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to an innumerable company of angels, and, above all, be for ever united to Jesus the Mediator, to dwell in his presence without fear of change, or intermission of blessedness, drinking of that pure 'river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High!'

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* The venerable William Hey, Esq., of Leeds, an eminent surgeon, and a devoted servant of Christ.

"Permit me sometimes to be remembered in your prayers; and believe me to be, with great respect and regard, my dear madam, your affectionate friend, and obedient servant,

"JOHN PEARSON."

The following, on the same occasion, is from Mrs. Bates:—

"*Gracehill, May* 19*th*, 1819.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just read, with mingled emotions, your account of the departure of your estimable husband. It recalls him most forcibly to my thoughts; and I could not forbear sitting down to tell you, and your family, that I remember the simplicity and energy of his prayers, and the strength of mind and principle, blended with kindness, which marked his conversation. I am glad that I knew and loved him. We are, both you and I, getting near the close of our present state. You, my very dear friend, have to say, 'Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days!' and I may also say, 'So it has been with me.' Perhaps, for the sake of others, I have been more borne with than would have been proper on my own account. Those who are called, as you are, to minister in spirituals, require special purification, if they are to be made vessels bearing their Lord's name. Those whose ministrations are in temporal things may be employed, though their garments are not quite so unspotted. This, however, marks the inferiority of their service. But I, with you, hope to see and rejoice in the glory of our Lord; and we shall then be reunited with all those who love him. This is a passage world; and our business in it has more reference to that which is to come than we are aware of.

"Your Lord will, I know, be to you a Comforter, Guide, and Head. I doubt not your latter day will exceed in light and love, like dear Mrs. Fletcher's. I always felt complacency in your marriage; a complacency which partook of a persuasion of its union with the Divine will. Therefore, I was sure you would be made a blessing where you went to sojourn; for His will is the life of our path. So far your work is done, and you have a Sabbath before you enter into rest. Your separation is a short one.

"Remember me in some future season, when you can ask that I may not come short of our Lord's best will concerning me. I remain with sincere affection, your grateful friend,

"ELIZABETH BATES."

The sentiments of regard to Mr. Mortimer, here expressed, will be confirmed by the following passage from a letter to himself:—

"*Blackheath, August* 16*th.*

"Our sun is setting; yet if Divine Mercy renders it a summer's evening, we may admire its softened rays, and use its light, (which is the matter of most importance,) to prepare for removal from the present state. We now stand near an invisible world. I rejoice in the friendship I have enjoyed with you; for I reckon that we shall return our thanks in a very pleasing manner to our benefactors, in an improved state; and as a heathen said, 'The benefactor never loses his rights,' we may have the pleasure of acknowledging them during the day of eternity. I have often thought, that Divine Wisdom knits his creatures together by benefits, to make strong the union of the universe. I am glad I paid you a visit when I could."

From her friend, Mrs. D. Whitmore, Mrs. Mortimer likewise received expressions of kind and Christian sympathy.

"*Catsbrook, April* 19*th,* 1819

"MY DEAR MADAM,—Ever since I heard of the bereavement it has pleased God that you should sustain, it has been in my heart to write to you; to assure you of the lively and tender interest I take in all that befalls you; and to recall myself to your remembrance, that I may not lose a place in your prayers, as I never fail to render you this only service in my power,—that of remembering you at a throne of grace. As the apostle exhorted his converts, and those of all ages in Christ, to pray for him, we have here a rule, that whatever our own standing in the Church may be, as to those for whom we pray, still it is a labour of love which even the weakest may bestow on the strongest. I should not by choice have written to you immediately on the event; as I by no means felt authorized to intrude prematurely on a season which I know must have been so solemn and so awful to you, or to add to that hurry and distraction which the business consequent upon it must have occasioned. I have made inquiries after you, and find that there is much reason to praise God on your behalf.

"I have lately seen a value in the truth, in the simple truth respecting every thing, far beyond what I ever before did; and I see with the utmost certainty that that truth must be sought for in God's word alone. From whatever other source we may collect the rays of this blessed light, we must bring them all here, to be verified and proved. For there is indeed much false light, and that often mingled with the true. How encouraging is the promise to the single eye! I sometimes feel as if all my desire was centred in the possession of it, and of that purity of heart to which it is promised to 'see God.' May I ask your prayers in my behalf for this blessing? Some Christians can write and speak as those who, in full reliance upon the promises, are lying as it were in ease and rest, beside the still waters of comfort. But this is not my state. I seem to see the increasing value of faith, humility, and love, and to be actuated, at times, by the greatest ardour to possess them; while at others I am much harassed by temptation. You, who have long been a guide and confidant to the children of God, will not, I am sure, be surprised at the selfishness incident to a state which has thus insensibly led me to be occupied more about myself than about you; and I do indeed feel a pleasure in laying open my heart to you, which I experience but rarely in my Christian intercourse. Perhaps the Lord may grant me this blessing in its greater measure of personal conversation. I do hope that you will now visit Shropshire again; and come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace, to stir us all up to seek that God and Saviour who has never bid any one seek his face in vain; to encourage us by your matured experience; and to point out that hand which has led and blessed you

> 'Through all the changing scenes of life,
> In trouble and in joy.'

We shall not probably otherwise meet this year, as many reasons are against my going to town.

My nephew,* has just been with us. I know you will be glad to hear that I have had much satisfaction from this visit. I do believe he is not only resting on the true foundation, but building upon it all the works of the Spirit. He is somewhat singular. His principal study is the Bible; of which he has great knowledge, and makes it, I believe, his rule in every thing. But, mixing little with the religious world, and being of an independent mind, he has nothing of its phraseology. In his life and conversation he exhibits the power of godliness, with little of the form; perhaps less than is desirable for the edification of others, and to prevent the being misunderstood. Will you accept the assurance of my sincerest respect and affection? I am, my dear madam, your most attached,

"D. WHITMORE."

At an early period of her widowhood, Mrs. Mortimer experienced a domestic calamity which considerably affected her spirits. It was the death of her nephew, Mr. Joseph Ritchie; a young man of considerable talent and enterprise, who, for scientific purposes, had, as the agent of the British government, undertaken to explore the regions of the Niger, and some other parts of Central Africa. With this facinating object, he left his friends and native country,

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* This gentleman has since attained to great professional eminence, and now fills one of the highest legal offices in this country.

> "For barbarous climes, and still more barbarous men."

He prosecuted his projected route as far as Mourzouk, the capital of Fezzan; where the dangers of his perilous adventure began to open fully upon him. He was seized with fever; and, through the cold neglect and treachery of the barbarians, fell a prey to famine and disease. This melancholy tale, which was unfolded to her by degrees, was very bitter to her tender heart. It was too painful to be made the subject of discourse; yet her refuge was in God, and in his will she felt it both her duty and her privilege to acquiesce. The following beautiful and touching lines will diversify the present subject, and show that her regretted relative was fashioned in no vulgar or unworthy mould.

LINES

WRITTEN BY MR. J. RITCHIE,

Between Dover and Calais, 1818, *when leaving his native land, to explore the interior of Africa.*

THY chalky cliffs are fading from my view;
  Our bark is dancing gaily o'er the sea;
I sigh, while yet I may, and say, Adieu,
  Albion, thou jewel of the earth! to thee
Whose fields first fed my childish fantasy,
  Whose mountains were my boyhood's wild delight,
Whose rocks, and woods, and torrents, were to me
  The food of my soul's youthful appetite,
  Were music to my ear, a blessing to my sight.

I never dream'd of beauty, but, behold,
  Straightway thy daughters flash'd upon my eye;
I never mused on valour, but the old
  Memorials of thy haughty chivalry
Fill'd my expanding heart with ecstasy;
  And when I thought on wisdom, and the crown
The muses give, with exultation high
  I turn'd to those whom thou hast call'd thine own,
  Who fill the spacious earth with their and thy renown.

When my young heart, in life's gay morning hour,
  At beauty's summons beat a wild alarm,
Her voice came to me from an English bower,
  And English smiles they were which wrought the charm:
And if, when lull'd to sleep on fancy's arm,
  Visions of bliss my riper days have cheer'd,
Of home, and love's fire-side, and greetings warm
  For one by absence and long toil endear'd,
  The fabric of my hope on thee hath still been rear'd.

Peace to thy smiling hearths, when I am gone!
  And mayst thou long thy ancient dowry keep,
To be a mark to guide the nations on,
  Like a tall watch-tower, flashing o'er the deep!
Still may'st thou bid the sorrower cease to weep,
  And throw the beams of truth athwart the night
That wraps the slumbering world, till, from their sleep
  Starting, remotest nations see the light,
  And earth be bless'd beneath the buckler of thy might!

Strong in thy strength I go; and wheresoe'er
  My steps may wander, may I ne'er forget
All that I owe to thee; and O may ne'er
  My frailties tempt me to abjure that debt!
And what if far from thee my star must set,
  Hast thou not hearts that will with sadness hear
The tale? and some fair cheek that shall be wet?
  And some bright eyes in which the swelling tear
  Will start for him who sleeps on Afric's deserts drear?

Yet will I not profane a charge like mine
  With melancholy bodings, nor believe
That a voice whispering ever, in the shrine
  Of my own heart, spake only to deceive.
I trust its promise, that I go to weave
  A wreath of palms, entwined with many a sweet
Perennial flower, which time shall ne'er bereave
  Of all its fragrance; that I yet shall greet
  Once more the ocean's queen, and cast it at her feet.*

But these trials, and some others, with which, about this period, she was exercised, like the clouds that form the back ground of a rich evening sky,—which serve but to throw out, with increasing lustre, the glorious rays of the setting sun,—only exhibited the graces that adorned her spirit, in more full relief. Tranquillity of mind, resulting from a faith which refers all things to God in their origin, and to eternity in their issue, was the prevailing temperament in which Mrs. Mortimer passed through the successive shadows that threw their darkening outline on the closing day of life. Under the pressure of advancing years, and when by bodily infirmity precluded from more active scenes of service, she exercised unwonted influence in the social and domestic sphere. Her piety, her wisdom, her discretion, were appreciated and honoured by her friends; who sought her counsel in emergencies, and had recourse to her for spiritual advice and consolation under circumstances of temptation and perplexity. In her sympathy and prayers affliction found a solace; and the resources of her mind, enlightened and established as it was in Christian truth and holiness, afforded to her friends such wise and suitable instructions, as led them often to detect the sophistries of error, and to discern the path of duty and of privilege. To the estimation in which she was held, and the confidence reposed in her religious knowledge and judgment, her correspondence bears pleasing testimony, and marks the weight of character she sustained. The following extracts from a letter, addressed to her by a most valuable and excellent clergyman, will show the light in which she was regarded by persons capable of appreciating her deep acquaintance with those truths which form in an especial manner that "secret of the Lord" which he reveals to none but holy and initiated minds. Their intrinsic value, as exhibiting the exemplary zeal, humility, and single-mindedness of the writer, is an additional motive for their introduction here.

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* In the forty-fifth number of the Quarterly Review, and in the Missionary Register for May, 1820, will be found the interesting particulars of this inauspicious enterprise. But from private sources Mrs. Mortimer received the most affecting account of this melancholy event.

"*September*, 1822.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—I trust, in troubling you with a letter, I am seeking good, some spiritual good for myself. But why should I trouble you? Because I think and trust that you will write me something that, with the Divine blessing, will be profitable to my soul. You have conversed with some of the excellent of the earth ; you can, perhaps, let me a little into their secrets. How did they walk so closely with God? How did they enjoy such constant communion with him? How did they get that odour of sanctity, (to use a rather peculiar but expressive phrase,) which they diffused around them, and so promoted widely the cause and glory of their Saviour? I trust, through the grace of God, I do feel a little of his presence; but it is a very little. I am conscious of amazing levity, vanity, and so much of self, that I hardly know, or think, that I ever do or say any thing to the glory of God only. I want these to be thrust out. I know prayer can obtain every thing. God does hear and answer me. Through Christ, my intercessor, I may have all and every thing of the kind I seek for; provided prayer be the prayer of faith. But, what else was there to which their advancement in godliness seemed owing?

"I think I feel something of a thirsting after God. I do wish to enjoy as much of him as can be enjoyed on earth ; at least, I sometimes do, at my better seasons. But I am persuaded the whole heart must be his. We must not not walk before him, as some of the kings of Israel did, 'not with a perfect heart.'

"As far as I can judge, timidity and fearfulness are no small snares to me. I do not find it difficult, generally, to be faithful in the pulpit; I feel little fear there. But I have in my parish several ungodly, profligate, despisers and haters of the truth, that will not hear; and to get at them, is indeed a burthen to me. Is not a minister of the Gospel somewhat differently placed, as to such persons, from what the early preachers of it were? Their flocks were professing Christians, hearers and professors too; many of mine, and of all parish ministers now, are not professing Christians, in the proper sense of that word: they do not profess, but bear, the Christian name. Mr. Fletcher, in his 'Portrait of St. Paul,' does not notice this; which seems to me the main difficulty in strictly applying St. Paul's example and declarations respecting himself, and his exhortations to Timothy, to a parish minister now. All Timothy's flock were professors, and avowedly under his care: I mean avowedly on their part. So it was with those whom St. Paul warned from house to house. It is not so with ours; they do not avow themselves under our care; it is almost, if not quite, the same as if Timothy had called on all the heathens within his district, and warned them. Now, pray, favour me with your thoughts on these points. I want to keep a conscience void of offence; yet I do not feel clear but that Satan may be taking an advantage here, to rob me of comfort and peace."

Mrs. Mortimer had recently undergone another domestic privation, in the removal of her second daughter, Miss E. Mortimer, by marriage, from the parental roof. On occasion of the loss of her interesting and affectionate society, she received the following kind and soothing letter from her friend, Mrs. D. Whitmore:—

"*Catsbrook, May 13th,* 1823.

"MY DEAREST MADAM,—There are few, if any, now left upon earth, with whom I find that kind of union, formed from esteem, love, and confidence, and that indescribable something, which removes all restraint, and renders intercourse so peculiarly pleasant and interesting, as with yourself. Amidst the continual and various changes of this fluctuating world, what a blessing it is to the Christian to have the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, fixed in Him who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!' Nor is he without minor props, which are in a degree exempt from the continued alterations around him; exempt, at least, as far as the spirit is concerned, though the stamp of vanity is affixed to all the material part. One of these is surely Christian friendship:—

'Our bodies may far off remove,
We still are one in heart.'

We may be scattered over the wide world; we may even be taken into another; but, still the link remains unbroken:—

'For all the subjects of our King
In earth and heaven are one.'

It is, I think, almost three years since I enjoyed the pleasure of your society; and many a change has taken place in regard to myself, since that time; particularly as it concerns my friends. The wind seems to have blown, and scattered them hither and thither; and I look around, and could almost ask, with the Persian poet, 'Where are they?' Yet I will not cherish the worldly feeling, that they are lost to me. No! we are only separated during our working day, to meet, at the hour of rest, in our Father's house.

"Perhaps we may never be intended to meet again in this world: yet the hours we have enjoyed together are not lost. Independently of adding to the catalogue of those mercies with which our gracious Father has blessed former days, they have been, I trust, the seeds of future good,—of future praise and blessedness. Surely we may humbly hope that the promise, Malachi iii, 16, 17, rested upon our acquaintance. With few, very few, have I ever enjoyed such Christian intercourse as with yourself; and I own I expect not to enjoy it again.

"But I have not yet entered on the chief subject that induced me to take up my pen at this time; and that is, the recent loss you have sustained of the society of your daughter. It is, indeed, all in the natural and authorized order of things; but still I am convinced that you must feel it as another stripping of the creature. May you have the best recompense for your loss, in being assured of her welfare, and that more than supply for every earthly bereavement,—closer communion with your Saviour! I dare say, you will recollect Baxter's remark, that he believes every Christian, in some part or other of his course, is called to partake of his Lord's experience, and to be left alone. Perhaps it may be so with some, more entirely than with others; because some require a greater weaning; and some are strong enough to bear it. Some will not be wholly brought to the Lord but by deep chastening; while of others, from possessing Abraham's faith, the Lord may see fit to demand the willing offering of their Isaacs.

"I dare not write in the usual style of congratulatory letters. I know not enough of the circumstances of the case to authorize me to form a guess of the probable chance of happiness. But this I can say, that I am interested in the welfare of my young friend; and trust I shall ever continue to remember her at a throne of grace. Called out on a busy scene, past recollections of me must fade from her memory. Becoming more and more recluse, on the contrary, they attain a stronger hold on me. It is with the feelings, as with the memory, in old age; they are more operative upon former than upon present things.

"I will bid you farewell, my ever dear and honoured friend, with two stanzas, that appeared, I believe, in America:—

'There is an hour of peaceful rest,
To mourning wanderers given;
There is a calm for souls distress'd,
A balm for every wounded breast;
'Tis found above—in heaven.

There fragrant flowers immortal bloom,
And joys supreme are given;
There rays Divine disperse the gloom;
Beyond the confines of the tomb
Appears the dawn of heaven.'

"Your ever grateful and attached friend,
"D. WHITMORE."

Mrs. Mortimer's health in 1824 was so far restored, that in the spring she paid a visit to her friends at Clifton, and spent part of the summer at Raithby. A few extracts from her correspondence will give the best idea of her circumstances at this time. To Mrs. Holland she writes as follows:—

"*Clifton-Hill, March 2nd*, 1824.

"MY DEAR MARY,—The accounts I have received from Eliza, respecting the Lord's goodness to you, have drawn out my heart in gratitude to Him who has dealt so graciously with you. I hope you continue to go on well, and that you will take care not to exert yourself too much: many by doing so have suffered for a long time.

"On the 16th ult. I left home; and, after a pleasant and profitable journey, reached my kind friends here on the 19th. They live in a way that suits me; seldom visiting,—and the friends that call on them are, in general, very intelligent and religious people. I see them or not, just as I please; and we spend our time together, or independently of each other.

"Yesterday, I went to Pensford with Miss E. F., and spent a few hours in the place where Mrs. P. laboured so constantly during the last years of her life. She has funded property for a school for girls. Mr. O. and Miss F.s continue to make up deficiencies, and a way is kept open for clothing and educating eighty girls. It was a solemn time to me, as Mrs. P. and many of my glorified friends seemed almost present with me. Miss F.s talk of a drive to Barley Wood; and as I am to be of the party, I wish I could transfer my place to you or dear Eliza.

"Several of my friends have been suddenly called home: this speaks loudly to me. They have gained the port, and I am waiting for fresh breezes to waft me into the blessed harbour. At present my health is tolerable; but Mr. Pearson says, I must still continue 'a fine lady.'* This calls for self-denial; as I am

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* "In November, 1822," says Mrs. Reynolds, "Mrs. Mortimer, having been for some time in a more delicate state of health than usual, was prevailed on to consult her friend Mr. Pearson; whose advice had been beneficial on former occasions. After hearing a statement of her general debility, Mr. Pearson advised entire quiet. 'Indeed,' he said, 'in order to make myself understood, I would recommend that, instead of your taking the lead in company as formerly, you should be content to let others do so; instead of praying yourself, let others pray; and, instead of assisting yourself to any thing you may wish for, you must in all respects, for the present, on Christian principles, assume the fine lady, and ring for your servant to wait upon you.'

"This, as may be supposed, was no small trial, to one of her active disposition. For a time, she could scarcely be reconciled to live, as she termed it 'uselessly;' but on a Christian friend's reminding her of the imsometimes disposed to try how far I can go: indeed, it is little that I can do, and that little produces fatigue.

"I must say, I feel increasing love to you, and regard for your welfare. Our local situation stimulates me to look forward to that day, when all the redeemed shall meet before the throne. I feel my own business is to prepare; but I am ashamed of the manner in which I perform it. Yet my Lord bears with me, and sweetly encourages me to come forward. Our adorable Redeemer has opened a way of constant access for us, into a fulness of Gospel blessings: let us avail ourselves of it, by coming in faith and prayer for a fuller baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"I often think, if my dear M. and her family were nearer to me, what an additional comfort it would be to the many I am now favoured with. But, blessed be God! we can meet in spirit; and should my health continue, I hope that a greater indulgence will be allowed us both at Raithby and at River-Terrace. I remain, my beloved Mary, your most affectionate

"E. MORTIMER."

The pleasing anticipation just expressed was happily realized; and on the 23rd of August,

portance of submission to the Divine will, and the exhibition of the passive graces, she said, 'It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good.' The advice was rigidly attended to; and had so happy an effect, that, after a time, she was enabled safely to resume, though but in a limited measure, those Christian exercises for which she was peculiarly qualified."

1824, Mrs. Mortimer thus writes from Raithby to her friend Mrs. J.:—

"My Dear Friend,—What says my good friend Mr. J. to leaving his cares and toils, and going for a fortnight or more with his daughters to breathe the country air, to see the beauties of nature, and, by beholding the rich plenty and beauty wherewith the earth is crowned, to be taught how to rise from earth to heaven? But if Mr. J. prefers sea breezes, floating vessels, and plunges in the briny ocean, I dare answer for my young friends being willing to accompany him. Tell him, I only recommend what I have been practising. Sea air, (which I now enjoy at Scagness,) country scenes, &c., have been of use to me. My health is better than when I left home; and if our Lord blesses a journey to him, as he has done to me, it will be worth his while to leave his engagements for a few weeks, to secure so desirable an object.

"You and I, my dear friend, have often seen immortal spirits vainly striving to quench their thirst for happiness at the streams of creature-comfort. Disappointment has been the result. How merciful in Him who has opened the way for our resting in himself alone! Tell your daughter B., if she has Herbert's Poems, to look for one called 'The Pulley,' and read it to you and her sisters. This fully illustrates my meaning; and you may explain to them how many more storms some pass through than others, before they attain to true rest, because they seek it where it is not to be found. But when it is found; when the soul that is seeking rest finds it in the Saviour; when the guilty conscience finds pardon, and the fallen spirit a Restorer, so as to be enabled to look up to God as in Jesus reconciled; then created things may be enjoyed, as streams flowing from the fountain; and, by being received as such, held in the Divine will, and, rendered back in the spirit of praise, all is enjoyed in God, and God in all. May you and I feel more of this spirit, and may our dear children know more of the things that are freely offered to them by infinite love! Yours, &c.,

"E. MORTIMER."

The benefit derived from these excursions was so considerable, that Mrs. Mortimer passed the winter in tolerable health and comfort; she was in general enabled to attend the means of grace; to fulfil her religious and benevolent engagements; and occasionally to enjoy the company of old and valued friends. Indeed, she felt herself so well that, in February, 1825, she ventured to repeat her visit to her kind friends at Clifton; where concurring circumstances, congenial to her taste and habits, made her feel peculiarly at home. To a dear friend, suffering under deeply affecting bereavement, she thus writes:—

"*Clifton, February* 12*th*, 1825.

"When I read your most interesting letter, my mind felt deeply for you; and all I could do, was to commend you to Him who has enabled your dear mother to overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and left you 'a stranger in a strange land.' Most tenderly do I feel for you and your dear sisters. The loss of such a parent as yours is a general loss; and under any circumstances must be keenly felt. But to you, my dear friend, the stroke is all point. It will open recollections which I pray the Father of spirits to enable you to restrain; and to give you such views of the glory into which our emancipated friends are admitted, as shall in some measure counteract what your affectionate heart would otherwise feel. As soon as I received your letter, my heart congratulated the patient sufferer; and praised our gracious Lord, who had permitted her to exchange the cross for the triumphant crown. And then I turned to you; and while pouring out my heart for mercies,—such as present support, and future blessing and direction,—those words of the psalmist seemed to be spoken in my mind, 'I will guide the meek in judgment.' I believe he will; and my prayer ever since has been, 'Lord, help my dear friend to believe this for herself; that she may not sink as heretofore, under this painful bereavement.'—Remember, He who is our God in covenant, is the faithful, promise-keeping Jehovah. My sympathizing love attends yourself and sisters. Wishing you all, in this world, a fulness of Gospel blessings, and hereafter an abundant entrance into that glory which shall be revealed, I remain, my dear friend, your truly affectionate

"E. Mortimer."

The Christian sympathy, evinced in this letter, formed a part only of a series of soothing and affectionate expressions of interest in the sorrows of a suffering friend. That sympathy was a cordial poured upon the wounded spirit, whose anguish called it forth. It was a gracious alleviation, prepared by the tenderness of Divine pity; and infused both strength and consolation in a mingled stream. It was an emanation from the God of love;—a reflection of the image of Him who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

Mrs. Mortimer, on leaving Clifton, visited her son, Mr. George Mortimer, at Yardley; but her excursions during this season were not attended with those beneficial effects which, on former occasions, had been happily the case. On her return home she received injury from a fall; the consequences of which she painfully felt for a considerable time; and, indeed, from this period she became the subject of increasing debility; being unable to endure fatigue, or make any effort, without great exhaustion and inconvenience to herself.

The following letter from Mrs. D. Whitmore will evince that lady's kind interest in every thing that concerned her friend:—

"*Catsbrook, May 3rd*, 1825.

"MY DEAREST MADAM,—It was no little comfort to us to hear from yourself of your safe arrival in London. Still I should be glad to be assured that no after inconvenience ensued from your fall, and the consequent exertion of travelling. We all missed you very much; but we had this solace in our deprivation, that our feelings were alike; and they, I think, are little susceptible of the finer feelings of our nature, who do not know the charm of sympathy, even in those things that pain and grieve us. In heaven we shall all think and feel, as well as speak, the same thing. And is it not in this union that the oneness spoken of in the Scriptures, must consist?

"It is our wants, our sins, and sorrows, which drive us to our Divine Friend: and what we all need, as Mrs. Fletcher said, is, to make more use of Christ; to go to him continually, and for every thing. And yet even many of us who are convinced of this truth, for want of right views of ourselves, lean upon every other broken prop;—lean upon man's agency, —a nothing without the Lord acts by him. Others, in a philosophical hardihood very dangerous to spirituality, leave all to a vague hope that things will be better by and by, that calamities will be averted, and that prosperity will ensue.

"I feel persuaded that I have your prayers: will you remember me, as regards my present situation; especially the vacuum my weak sight necessarily occasions? I cannot now, as heretofore, get out of self by better society in books. I must go to higher converse still; and this is a lesson, I fear, I have very imperfectly learned. I still have many a sigh after those friends that have so often cheered my solitary hours, and lessened grief, and lulled pain, throughout my pilgrimage.

"I am aware that one of the dangers attending the diminished power of usefulness is a decay of the desire. I think, therefore, that, in such a state, we ought to be particularly watchful for, and careful in using, every opportunity the Lord affords us; and, after all, his openings are the only real ones to usefulness. Were you here, how much I should like to say to you, and hear your remarks. As I become a less busy actor on the stage, the drama of life seems to furnish me with a greater fund of observation and reflection; yet, what danger is there of forming false conclusions from mistaken and imperfect premises! I often think of St. Paul's injunction, 'Judge nothing before the time;' when, the secrets of all hearts being laid open, we shall not only know our common nature and the real state of our friends, but our own characters,—'yea, I judge not my own self,'—or, as you comprehensively sum it up, 'every Divine secret shall be laid open.' Ever yours, D. WHITMORE."

Increasing infirmity from this time precluded travelling, and Mrs. Mortimer did not again leave home to undertake a long journey. Her annual visits to her daughter, Mrs. Reynolds, at Newington, were, however, still regularly continued; where she seemed to enjoy society, and generally returned with improved health and spirits. But feeling her strength inadequate to any farther effort, she thus writes in reply to Mrs. Holland, on the subject of a kind invitation to visit her at Raithby:—

"*Newington, June* 25*th*, 1825.

"MY DEAR MARY,—Eliza will tell you every thing as to our families, friends, &c. Still I cannot let her leave home, without a line to thank you for your kind letter and warm invitation. The love I bear to you and yours would lead me willingly to accept the latter, and renew the sweet opportunities which, in times past, we have enjoyed together, in your peaceful retreat. But, though my heart kindles with gratitude to God and you at the recollection of them, at present I can only give it vent by praying that the choicest blessings may descend on you all. May your dear little girl be to you what you have been to me; and may my dear Mary and Mr. Holland, if spared to between three and four score years of age, find in their children what I have found in some of mine! Your love, and dear Eliza's, has been a cordial in my cup. I often thank my gracious God for the harmony which has subsisted among us, and the love we feel for each other.

"If I were only spirit, I should often join your little party; but, as it is, we will endeavour to meet at the Saviour's feet. We can join hearts, if not voices, in supplicating for grace. May a plentiful effusion descend on you both!

"Yours, E. MORTIMER."

To the friend, whom she so kindly addressed on the subject of recent bereavement, Mrs. Mortimer again writes, in reference to a proposed visit to Manchester, which had been anticipated with much pleasure, both by herself and by her kind friends:—

"*River-Terrace, July*, 1825.

"Want of inclination will not prevent me, if I find my strength is equal to such an exertion. At present, home, and much quiet, suit me best. I can bear no fatigue, and am obliged to live what I should once have called a useless life; but I am endeavouring to learn the lessons of resignation and self-abasement, which the Lord intends to teach me. On the past, I look back with humiliation, gratitude, and love. How tenderly and how bountifully has the Lord dealt with me! goodness and mercy have followed me all my days; and, through my Redeemer's merit, I believe I shall dwell in his house for ever. You and I, my dear friend, have much to be thankful for: let us take the cup of salvation, and continue to call on the name of the Lord: he delights in our prosperity, and waits to fill our hearts with his love. Look at your mercies more than at your wants, and at Him with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, rather than at any of the changing scenes beneath the sun; and he will fulfil the promises in your behalf, in which he has caused you to trust. I have felt much sweetness in those words, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Meet me, my dear friend, in meditation on them, and let us pray for a fuller experience of what they encourage us to expect."

"*September* 1*st*, 1825.

"The extremely hot weather affected me much: I was very poorly, and felt thankful that I was not from home. The weakness I experienced is inexpressible, and my appetite was quite gone. I thank God, I am now better, and take my food nearly as usual.

"If I may judge from present feelings, my time for active service, in our Lord's vineyard, is nearly past; as the languor I feel is excessive. But, blessed be my Lord! he helps me to believe, to love, to abide in peaceful resignation at his feet, and to rejoice in hope of that day, when, with all our elder brethren, as well as with my dear friends who are now fighting the fight of faith, I shall praise, adore, and love. One chief lesson, which our Lord has lately taught me, has been by casting light on those words, 'We are saved by hope.' I have not sufficiently lived in the exercise of this blessed grace, respecting what revelation unfolds and faith apprehends. Help me by your prayers. I remain always, my dear friend, Yours most affectionately, E. MORTIMER."

In the summer of 1826, in addition to the increased debility consequent upon advancing age, Mrs. Mortimer was visited, for a season, with a distressing failure of sight, which it was feared would end in total blindness. This was a trial to her faith; as it debarred her from those exercises in which she had been long accustomed to find profit and delight. But patience had its perfect work. Her spirit had been trained to habits of submission, and filial acquiescence in the will of God. She understood the purpose of her heavenly Father in the discipline which he inflicts upon his children; and was content and thankful that her meetness for the stainless purity of his eternal presence should be furthered by the methods which his wisdom saw it most expedient to employ. Many hours were passed in silence and seclusion, unrelieved by those engagements which beguile and even lend a charm to solitude. But the soul could still exert its faculties; and these had long been conversant with objects discerned by other eyes than those of sense. The light of heaven, in its own hallowed brightness, shone upon her mind; revealing splendours such as never emanate from mere material suns. Free in thought, and fervent in affection, she held communion with the Father of her spirit; passed, by "the new and living way," into the inmost sanctuary; and there, amidst a world of pure intelligences, held converse more intense and intimate with things eternal and Divine, than when accessible to more distinct impressions from the forms of sense. To those friends who were privileged with her society at this period, the mellowing richness of her Christian character was most apparent. When coming to them from the mount, she would endeavour to add wings to their devotion, and invite them to ascend with her to those more elevated regions, where, by transforming views of the Redeemer, and nearer surveys of the bright inheritance beyond the flood, they might be stimulated to increased activity, and run their course in joyous expectation of their rich and permanent reward. But the full extent of painful apprehension, on the subject of her blindness, through Divine mercy, was not realized. Although her power of vision still remained exceedingly imperfect; yet, with considerable help from glasses, she could read a portion of the Scriptures daily, and discern, though often not distinctly, the persons of her friends. Her correspondence was of necessity relinquished. In a few instances, however, Mrs. Reynolds kindly took up her mother's pen, as will appear from the subsequent acknowledgment of Mrs. Bates, who, like the friend she addresses, seems to be standing as a stranger on the verge of time:—

"*Bath, September* 28*th*, 1826.

"My Dear Friend,—I have just received a most pleasing letter from your dear daughter, Mrs. Reynolds; for which I beg to thank both you and her. I have taken my present lodging for a year, though I consider it merely as a tent of waiting, and, would humbly pray, of preparation also, for a removal from this earth at no great distance of time. I look to you as one of the upper servants, who have had confidential business to transact relative to spiritual matters. My place, for which I have to return many thanks, was in the out-offices, some of which wanted repair, and others erection: of course, this work admits of a visible conclusion; and I now retire, expecting not to see the prosperity of any of the Churches, but their shaking.

"This long and deeply-rooted view makes me feel detached from the present scene; and glad to be permitted to look toward a city that cannot be moved. Here I have neither home nor family; and the majority of the friends of my youth are in paradise. Yourself, my dear friend, are almost the only exception. What I am now concerned for, is, that my few remaining steps may be under the hand of our Lord and Saviour; the order of whose will is life and light. You will perhaps ask, why I look for a shaking of Churches: I answer, because I look for a shaking of kingdoms.

"The restored Hebrew Church will become capable of receiving and retaining the new wine;* and, when clothed with the new garments, will appear as becometh the priests and kings of the earth.

"But now, my dear friend, I must more immediately address you, and say that I rejoice in our Lord's dealings with you. He has long been your light, and is now gradually withdrawing you from all but himself. This constitutes the best and most favoured preparation for being called home to him.

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* Luke v, 36.

"To-day I was edified in reading the account of the feast of dedication, John x, 22, in which I find that the Jews illuminated their houses with lights placed before their doors. Hence I incline to think that we should begin the account of our Lord's discourse in the eighth chapter of St. John, and continue it to the 39th verse of the tenth chapter, as being held in the temple, (partly in Solomon's porch, a beautiful part of the temple,) during the feast of the dedication; and hereby our Lord's saying, that he was the light of the world, receives a fuller meaning from the surrounding scene; especially considering that he was himself the true anti-type of the temple, whose dedication the people were then celebrating with lights placed before their doors.

"A few days ago I heard of Mr. Pearson's death. Mrs. Reynolds says it was unexpected. I am never surprised at my friends dying. I rather am more surprised that people live, seeing the means of death encompass us daily. Our days on earth have appeared to me increasingly important as they shorten. How to fill them up, so as to get as near as we are capable of to God, is the great secret of duty and happiness. That inestimable means ('looking to Jesus') is still new and important, and contains in it innumerable counsels, comforts, and admonitions. Yours, E. M. BATES."

The following short letter from Mrs. Mortimer, to her daughter at Raithby, is probably the last she ever penned:—

" *October* 27*th*, 1828.

"MY DEAR MARY,—If all the letters my heart has dictated to you in the night season, during my late illness, had been written and sent by post, you would have been half ruined. They were ended in prayer, and my blessed Lord permitted their free access to the mercy seat. Accept my thanks for all your love and kindness. Your little cakes were very good, and the message in which they were inclosed made them doubly acceptable. We have been drinking of the same cup; but infinite wisdom and love mixed the ingredients. May you be fully restored, and both of us reap sanctified effects! As to myself, I am very weak and feeble; but the Lord is my strength and my salvation. The promises are precious; they open upon me. Yes, my Mary, I often anticipate the blessed day, when, with all that are gone before, and with all that are following, we shall unite to praise God and the Lamb for ever. I love you here, and often praise God for the mutual blessings he has given us through each other; but, in the world to come, every grace shall be perfected, and we shall join to give glory to him through whom we met below.

I wish you may be able to read what I have written. I remain, yours, &c,

"E. MORTIMER."

CHAPTER VI.

"If my pilgrimage and warfare have such mercies, what shall I find in my home, and in my triumph? If I have found so much in this strange country, at such a distance from God, what shall I have in heaven, in his immediate presence?"—BAXTER.

How truly and how beautifully is it said of man, that "he cometh up like a flower, and is cut down;" thaf "he passeth away also as a shadow, and continueth not!" It is a pensive task to trace the progress of individual life. With what interest is marked, in the commencement, every almost latent germ of character! Its developement by casual incident or careful cultivation is distinctly traced; and shortly, in its perfect loveliness of form and colour, it expands mature beneath the curious and investigating eye. But while that eye is yet exercised in observation, the delicacy of its tints begins to fade, and the gracefulness of its form is in some slight measure impaired. The meridian sun exhausts the dew from its petals; and the wind discomposes the beautiful order of their arrangement. It loses by degrees its attractions, and the breeze of the evening soon lays its honours in the dust. But there is also a spirit in man; and that inspiration of the Almighty, which superadded to his inferior existence this immaterial and intelligent principle, and which gives expansion to his faculties in the bloom of opening life, will never remit its operations, or leave the immortal nature to suffer the fearful, the fatal collapse of death. Revelation lets in the light of eternity upon the gloom of decay, and the darkness of the grave. It restores to the embraces of friendship and affection those that have been severed by the blast of the desert; it soothes the regrets of the stranger, left to finish his journey in loneliness; and it solves the mysterious enigma of human life. Under the pressure of these emotions, which cannot but affect the thoughtful mind, while reviewing the brief period allotted to man's mortal existence, together with the various changes and chances to which that existence is subjected, how consoling, animating, and delightful is the assurance, that though "a man die, yet he shall live again!"

Under the sustaining influence of immortal hope, the last season of life may be contemplated, not only without dismay, but with serene and holy joy. The traveller is within sight of his home; the pilgrim has nearly escaped the perils of the wilderness; the long absent son is on the eve of admittance to the paternal mansion; the saint is on the verge of heaven, in the precincts of the vision of God. The hoary head is a crown of glory, when found in the way of righteousness; and the haloes that encircle it are as wreaths of light, which shine to cheer and animate in their progress those who are as yet at a farther distance from the goal. But faith, which gives subsistence to things unseen, and is the evidence of anticipated realities, is the only principle that can disperse the shadows, and dispel the gloom, which will otherwise collect and settle heavily around the chill and cheerless evening of departing life.

Mrs. Mortimer was brought within the verge of fourscore years, when mortal sickness made its last and irresistible attack. Its precursors were excessive languor, and such infirmities as flesh is heir to, when standing on the borders of the grave.

On the morning of December 25th, 1834, a sudden seizure, in its nature not distinctly ascertained, made an impression on her mental faculties, as well as on her outward frame. She fell down in her chamber, and was for some time incapable of speech. Yet from this attack she partially recovered, and in a few days was able to converse for a short time with her most intimate friends. The brain, however, was disturbed and weakened in its functions; and returns of aberration not unfrequently occurred. There were yet lengthened intervals of convalescence; and on these occasions, as opportunity was given, she testified, that though the floods and storms were now descending, yet her faith was firm; it was established on the everlasting Rock. Meek submission to the will of her Redeemer; patience, humble prayer, and thankfulness for a long life of mercies; with self-renunciation, and entire reliance on the meritorious death and intercession of her Saviour; were the dispositions which she uniformly manifested when adverting to her state and prospects, as she stood upon the borders of the unseen world. But there were seasons when overwhelming languor, for a while, was superseded by the efforts of the loftier principle within; when faith and hope, with holy energy, seemed to exalt her on expanded wings to heaven, and to give the foretaste of approaching bliss. Her richest views, as well as her sublimest and most hallowed feelings, were elicited in conversation with the friends, who, in some favourable moments, were so happy as to catch the sparks of light and love that emanated from her spirit; cheering the gloom and solitude of sickness, and discovering death to be a stingless though a direful foe. The lips of the wise diffuse knowledge; and the testimony of saints to the love and faithfulness of the Redeemer affords instruction and encouragement to those who follow them in their triumphant course. On one occasion, after tenderly inquiring into the circumstances of a suffering friend, she lifted up her heart in silent prayer, and then desired that, with her kind and sympathizing love, the following information might be given: "Tell Mr. and Mrs. M.," said she, "that I am waiting in expectation of a great change. Changes, you know, are often causes of apprehension, because they may be for the worse. But that is not my case. I am anticipating my change with joy; because I have a rational, Scriptural, well-grounded hope, that it will be for the better. It will be to a state where there is no suffering, no pain, no infirmity; where I shall behold my Saviour, and be for ever filled with his love! It will be all glory! But I have no distinct conception of what it will be like. I can form no idea of that which is infinite. My mind is lost when I attempt to realize it. But my Saviour is my rock, and my refuge; and I rejoice in the blessed hope of everlasting life with him." A beaming joy overspread her countenance while giving utterance to these expressions, which were pronounced at intervals with deep solemnity; and seemed to issue from a sainted spirit on the confines of the world of light.

At another time, she said, "I am very weak; I can do nothing: but the Lord is good. I love to call him *my* Saviour! *my* Jesus!" She then repeated those lines:—

"Thy succour afford, thy righteousness bring;–
Thy promises bind thee compassion to have,
Now, now, let me find thee almighty to save."

Her mind, through weakness, sometimes wandered; and she imagined that she had been dreaming. "I often dream," she said, "and should be glad not to dream so much, because my dreams are not always pleasant. But the Lord controls all."

On January 6th, 1835, she was informed of the death of an aged friend; and association led her back to early times and scenes; but in regularly connecting her remembrances, she found considerable difficulty. Of this she was quite conscious, and observed, "My faculties fail. When I think of one subject, if another strikes my mind, I lose the first idea; neither can I fully express what I mean to say." "Your faculties," said a friend, who wished to relieve her from something like embarrassment, "will soon be renewed in immortal vigour. The subjects of your early recollections are nearly all of them gone into eternity: both the persons and their concerns are passed away." With rekindling animation, she replied, "Yes: the world passes away; and every thing connected with it perishes; but 'he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'" "It is," said her friend, "a delightful thought, that there is something permanent, even though we live in a world so subject to change: God is immutable, and so is the heaven in which he dwells. Our spirits, too, are immortal, and shall soon find their unchanging portion there." "On that," she said, "I love to meditate. I look backward on a long line of passing shadows, but I cannot see far forward." Again adverting to her want of distinct ideas on the subject of the future glory, "A Christian," it was observed, "whether he looks backward or forward, finds occasions for gratitude, and hope, and love. He can say, 'Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days.'" "Yes," she added, "'and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.' But there is occasion for humility. The past might have been more diligently improved." "It would be a painful retrospect," said her friend, "were it not for the blood of atonement." "It would be dreadful! dreadful!" she exclaimed with great emphasis, "but—

> 'His blood for me did once atone,
> And still it pleads before the throne.'"

It may perhaps be here necessary to state, that Mrs. Mortimer was always desirous to hear her friends express their sentiments on whatever subjects formed the topics of conversation. She would often say to those who visited her, "I wish to hear you talk; that will do me good: but my friends must not expect me to talk much to them now; I have not strength to do it." Indeed, her debility was in general so great, that, unless assisted by the observations of others, she could scarcely sustain the effort requisite for discourse. Her views were therefore chiefly elicited in replies. But although in such a state of feebleness, yet the sight of old and dear friends often seemed a cordial to her spirit; and she would generally address to them a few impressive words, even when incapable of greater effort.

A few weeks before she was removed, a friend remarked, that she had served a good Master, from the age of sixteen to eighty, and that He would not now forsake her: with a most expressive look and manner, she said, "Poor service! unprofitable service! but I cast myself on the atoning sacrifice, and there I find rest and peace."

At another time, in an interview with Mrs. Wilkinson, she said, "Speak of heaven. O! what a company is there!" To the same friend, on her expressing an assurance that she would end well, she replied, lifting up her hands and eyes, "Yes; and why? Because I have an Intercessor, in whom I have power to rest; for remember I have nothing wherein to trust but Christ. I have no deservings, no merit."

Yet, there were peculiar seasons when she gave spontaneous utterance to her feelings, and expressed the deep and holy thoughts on which she pondered when communing with God in the interior of her spirit, while abstracted from the world without. On one of these occasions, after a temporary revival from the affecting pressure of disease, she spoke much of her own unworthiness, of the sufficiency of the grace of Christ, and of the Divine goodness to her in the present time of need: wondering that she was not more drawn out in love to that God who had so loved the world as to give his Son to be a sacrifice for sin; on the merit of whose death alone she expressed her entire dependence for salvation. The love of God, the glory of the Saviour, and the privileges of believers, were the subjects of discourse. "I believe," she said, "that I shall behold my

Saviour's glory; but I cannot distinctly realize its nature." The passage quoted from the Prophet Isaiah by St. Paul, she observed, related to the privileges of believers in the present life. God reveals to them, by his Spirit, things which the carnal mind is unable to comprehend; but its meaning might be extended, so as to include the higher glories and discoveries of the future state. Animated by the subject, she exclaimed, with holy fervour, and devout expression both of voice and gesture, "And can it be that I shall behold that glory?" Being reminded of the words of the Redeemer, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," —her faith embraced them with renewed energy; and, yielding to the ineffable influence of Divine love, she was filled with gratitude and praise.

In her silent and solitary hours she meditated much on reunion with departed saints. "I cannot express," she would sometimes say, "how I exult in the anticipation of soon rejoining those friends from whom I have been separated here below; yet it seems strange that, although so near to the world of spirits, I cannot see them." It was observed, that "that world was now visible to the eye of faith alone; but she would soon drop the veil, and then faith would be exchanged for sight. Now, she was saved by hope, then she would be admitted to realize in full fruition her anticipated heaven." Holy joy illumined her sweet and venerable, but emaciated countenance, and spoke entire assent to what had been advanced. Prayer and a solemn benediction, pronounced with most impressive emphasis, concluded this affecting interview, which seemed preparative to the converse of the heirs of heaven. It was consecrated by the presence of the Saviour; doubtless by that of his angelic ministries; and why not also by that of glorified and sainted friends? How hallowed are such scenes! Disease may weigh down the corruptible frame of the dying Christian; and, like a haze in the lower atmosphere, obscure the beams of the intellectual sun: but the light of heaven breaks through the dimness, and reveals visions of glory, even amidst the desolations of the valley of the shadow of death.

Increasing weakness, and occasionally more of positive suffering, filled up the measure of that cup of mortal sorrow which, by the wisdom of her heavenly Father, it was ordained that she should drink. Like her Divine Master, she was ever found prepared to say, "Thy will be done." A meek, filial, and submissive character was deeply stamped upon her spirit; and every fresh ingredient, added to the bitter and unpalatable draught, she patiently accepted, as the wise appointment of paternal love. When the mandate of dismission should arrive, she was prepared to welcome it; but till her summons came, she was content to suffer, as under other circumstances she had sought to do, the will of God. About a month before her death, she requested to receive the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which was solemnly administered to her by her son, the Rev. Thomas Mortimer, B. D. Her family and two friends were admitted to join with her on this interesting occasion. It was a prelude to tasting of the "new wine" at the richer banquet prepared for saints in heaven.

On Saturday, the 4th of April, to a friend who inquired how she was, she replied that she felt inexpressible weakness, as well as considerable pain: "But," she added "it is all as my Lord pleases: and he gives me patience to await his will." She was unable to converse at greater length; but, on parting, pronounced her solemn blessing on her friend; as on that day, and the following, which was the Sabbath, she also did on some of the younger members of her family, to whom she gave her last impressive counsel with calm benignity and tender love. On Monday she was seized with an oppressive stupor, from which she only partially recovered; and though she occasionally recognized friends around her, yet the vital principle was so far exhausted as to have nearly sunk below the power of speech.

On the 9th of April, the day of her departure, she lay as in a tranquil sleep. Toward evening her respiration became short and quick, till about seven o'clock; when, almost imperceptibly, she breathed her last. The shaft of death was pointless: his approach was without terror, and his commission, to all appearance, executed without pain. Neither groan nor struggle indicated suffering, while the spirit took its flight from the terrestrial, shattered tabernacle to the felicities and joys of paradise. Her end was perfect peace. She was interred in the burying ground of the City-Road chapel, on Thursday, April 16th ; and the solemn event was improved by Dr. Bunting, in a funeral sermon, on the 26th of the same month.

The following beautiful sketch of Mrs. Mortimer in old age, from the pen of her interesting friend, Mrs. D. Whitmore, is communicated by Mrs. Reynolds :—

"It was my privilege, in the spring of 1831, to spend three weeks in the house with dear Mrs. Mortimer. The bodily frame was now evidently sinking under the weight of years ; but the mind was then seemingly unimpaired, except that the weakness of the frame prevented that animation which had previously been so marked a feature in her character. She declined all general society, and conversed much less, even with her friends ; but the same occasional spark of intelligence lighted up her countenance, and the same smile of benevolence cast its mild lustre over it. She took great pleasure in hearing what was read to her, and in the discussions which often arose in consequence ; and though her own remarks were comparatively few, she confirmed or rectified the opinions of others by her enlightened judgment. Never was decay more pleasingly presented—in a manner, which not only brought with it no humiliating appearance, but had even a grace that rendered it attractive. Her spare and delicate form moved so lightly, that you hardly heard her tread; and I often felt that it was like something scarcely earthly moving around me. Nothing querulous, nothing complaining, ever escaped her lips; no transgression of Solomon's rule, 'Say not that the former days were better.' Incapable, from weakness of sight, of most employments, she would, to fill up her time, cheerfully fold papers for lighting; and this she did in so orderly and arranged a manner, that we used laughingly to call it 'her manufacture.' How often, while with her, during this happy and instructive period, did I think of what she had said a few years before,—'I feel I must pray for grace to grow old!' And assuredly her prayer has been heard. A near relative of mine, of uncommon refinement, and sensibility almost to excess, saw her at this time, and said, 'I have often seen old age respectable and estimable, but seldom interesting: Mrs. Mortimer's is interesting.' Mrs. Mortimer was much by herself: we never saw her till the middle of the day. She told me that she always read the Psalms and Lessons before she left her room; adding, 'It is too large a portion of Scripture for such a purpose, but we may select parts of it.' This reminds me of dear Mrs. Fletcher, who, in her latter years, said in her meeting, 'I am now obliged to take a whole chapter for your instruction; formerly a few verses were sufficient for me, but my mind will not now dwell so long upon one subject only.'—After this visit, I never again saw this dear and honoured friend. I now rejoice at that which often seemed to me a privation; as the recollection of her occurs in a mellowed, sober form, deprived indeed of its more brilliant attractions, but scarcely less beautiful in the mild decay of the Christian approaching the tomb, where all that is corruptible shall be left, and what was 'mortal shall put on immortality.' Few have ever exhibited more perfectly the renewal, by the Spirit, of the image of God. She had been indeed born again from above. Let us now rejoice, that this child of God, beholding her Saviour as he is, is more like him; and, above all, let us who have received the talent of knowing her, follow her steps, and, through faith and patience, rejoin her in the glorious circle who are now casting their crowns before the throne."

THE chief circumstances in the life of this interesting and eminent Christian, have now passed successively in review: her character, with the principles upon which it was formed, has been examined; and the force and efficiency of those principles have been tasted, through a protracted course of more than fourscore years. As a beautiful example of their power to change, renew, and elevate man's fallen nature, to fit him for fulfilling the high purposes of his existence in the present life, and to prepare him for the life to come, it is presumed she may now be happily adduced. Her Christianity was truly valuable, both to herself and others: it conferred advantages which, conscientiously and diligently used, enlarged her sphere of influence, and raised her to a station in society which she otherwise would not have occupied. In the hand of the industrious servant, the one talent became two, and the two five. Usefulness and influence acted and reacted on each other; her character acquired consolidation; and efficiency, moral, practical, and intellectual, was the important and desirable result.

The structure of Mrs. Mortimer's mind appears to have been naturally sound. Judgment, discretion, prudence, consideration, may be regarded as its component elements. But it was the introduction of a higher principle that gave direction to these faculties, that stimulated and expanded her whole intellectual and moral nature, and imparted to her life its useful, exemplary, and energetic character. That principle was religion. In early youth it took possession of her heart, subdued its passions, regulated its desires, and fixed its tender, warm, and unsophisticated love on things important, holy, and sublime. Hence life assumed a different form and colour: years that would have rolled away in ordinary and contracted occupations, were devoted to engagements of a higher order; and employed not for secular and personal advantage merely, but directed to promote the highest interests of her species, her own salvation, and the glory of her God.

Mrs. Mortimer's religion, as the preceding pages have evinced, was truly spiritual: it was a "life hid with Christ in God." The faculties of her interior nature had been quickened into vigorous exercise; and her perceptions realized existences and operations which revelation only renders sensible to the illumined eye of faith. As a citizen of the Jerusalem above, she held communion, not only with the ever blessed Trinity, but with "the whole family" of God "in heaven and earth." Nor was she unaware of the existence, or the stratagems, of that malignant, subtle, and powerful adversary who seeks the overthrow of human souls. An elevated seriousness of spirit was the result of these unworldly views; and a demeanour, eminently devotional, tended to impress on others the same consciousness of the reality and nearness of those spiritual and unseen objects with which she herself appeared to be so conversant. Great simplicity, humility, and heavenly-mindedness, were the characteristics of a profound and comprehensive piety, which, by a transition that appeared instinctive, passed from earthly cares, perplexities, and sorrows, to the contemplation of a state of permanent and perfect blessedness beyond.

In common with her revered father in the Gospel, Mr. Wesley, Mrs. Mortimer felt a lively interest in the special observance of that day which, by the Church of England, is set apart for solemn reminiscence of "the dead in Christ." It was her practice, on All Saints' Day, to read the beautiful Collect, and the portions of Scripture, appointed in the Liturgy to be used on that occasion. She was accustomed also to enumerate, at these seasons, the bereavements she had suffered through the past year;—or rather the additions that had been made to the heavenly family, from the circle of her friends, during that period; and, as her friendships were all formed in reference to eternity, she rejoiced in hope of that glorious day when the whole body of Christ, in ineffable association with him, their living Head, shall find that perfect consummation of joy and felicity in his presence "which he has prepared for them that" unfeignedly "love him."

Yet, while devout in spirit, she was eminently practical; and, with singular propriety and wisdom, adapted her conversation to the circumstances of her friends. To the young especially she sought to recommend religion; and, by mild and persuasive invitations, to induce them, at whatever cost or sacrifice, to choose the better part. As her connections were extensive, her influence in this respect was great; and when, by the infirmity of years, excluded from more active service, she thus occupied a post in which the piety and wisdom of her counsels received increasing sanction from her weight of character.

Her friendships were among the special blessings of her life: they were the retributions of a gracious Providence, for sacrifices made in early youth. In the foregoing pages have been given examples of the beautiful and edifying combination of talent, piety, and pure affection, formed by her extensive correspondence with persons of no ordinary mind. Her friendship with the venerable Wesley was the leading star to future excellence and elevation. With the devoted Fletchers she breathed an element of sainted and seraphic ardour. By Lady Maxwell, lofty, solemn, spiritual, mysterious, she was led to high contemplative religious exercises;—while humble, gentle Lady Mary Fitzgerald, by her affectionate and pious intercourse, soothed and refreshed the tenderest feelings of her heart. The masculine, discriminating, practical, yet speculative, mind of Mrs. Bates supplied a stirring, vivid, stimulating impulse to the understanding;—in connection with which she had the benefit of the chastened, touching, Christian sentiment of Mrs. Whitmore, and of the manly yet exalted piety of Mr. Pearson. These, and the many others who have been before specified, form such a cluster of invaluable names, as few can number in their list of friends.

Of the estimation in which Mrs. Mortimer was held by this interesting circle, and of the confidence they reposed in her, their correspondence affords sufficient proof; and the influence acquired in directions so various, cemented and matured, in every instance, by increasing years, affords delightful indication of the moral power of gentle and persuasive goodness, to attract affection, and conciliate respect and love. Thus honoured and esteemed, while her attachments, formed on permanent and holy principles, were calculated to survive the changes of mortality, she never, by unkind, and cold, and vacillating conduct, lost her friends. Candour, simplicity, and frankness, marked her general intercourse; gentleness and dignity were combined in her demeanour; while devotion, which was the habit of her mind, had cast her very countenance into a heavenly mould. A benign expression, not unlike that which distinguished the revered and honoured patron of her early life, and which might, possibly, have been in part acquired insensibly from him, made her an object of regard and interest (although apparelled in the plainest style) wherever she appeared. She belonged evidently to no ordinary class of persons; there was a sanctity in her aspect and deportment, an ethereal bearing, that distinguished her from others, as a being of a holier and superior kind. In her conversation, piety, humility, a kind regard for others, and general good sense and wisdom, formed the pure, benevolent, and leading elements. While possessing physical and intellectual power, she much enjoyed society ; and sought to make the interviews of Christian friends at once instructive and delightful, by starting seasonable and interesting topics of discourse, which she well knew could be elucidated by some portion of her company, from whom the rest would gladly learn. Thus giving to the hours of social intercourse, a rational and elevated character, she made necessary recreation at once a relaxation and refreshment; alike conducive to invigorate the natural and intellectual powers ;—an object most desirable, yet often truly difficult to be attained.

Her sympathy with suffering friends has been already manifest. Her counsels, prayers, and efforts, were continually offered to alleviate or remove distress: nor, while her ear received the tale of sorrow, was confidence loquaciously or inconsiderately betrayed. The poor, the sick, and the afflicted, were objects of her kind solicitude: few, perhaps, have been so often seen as ministering angels in the chamber of affliction; speaking words of comfort to the sorrowful, the agonized, the dying, or commending them in solemn and believing supplication to the care and mercy of a present God. By many a sainted spirit, whom she has assisted to surmount the sorrows of mortality, she has no doubt been welcomed to the regions of eternal rest.

In the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom she felt a lively interest. For the Church and for its ministers, her prayers incessantly ascended to the throne of the Most High. For those to whom she was united in the fellowship of Christ, she felt a love which neither the infirmities of age, nor the exhausting languors of disease, could quench. A few months before her death, conversing on this subject with a friend, she said, "I find *intercession* a very interesting engagement: it seems the only way in which I can now promote the benefit of others, or the glory of my Saviour; but this is still open to me; and I feel it profitable and pleasant to be so employed."

As a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, she was one of its brightest and most consistent ornaments; and justified through life the regard with which she had been honoured by its venerable and illustrious founder. In those departments of usefulness which the system so extensively presents, she was ever ready to occupy her proper sphere; which she did, not only with unshrinking fidelity, but with great success. Her knowledge and experience of Divine truth, together with the liveliness, suavity, and simplicity of her manner, gave her great spiritual influence, and access to many hearts. In charities, and various schemes of secular benevolence, she was active, zealous, and discriminating, not easily deceived by hypocritical pretenders, nor restrained, on just occasions, from administering reproof.

As a professor of the religion of the heart, Mrs. Mortimer gave proof that spirituality is not necessarily enthusiastic or fanatical; but that there is a real, a delightful, a transforming intercourse to which the human spirit is admitted with the ever blessed God. The deep and mystic promises of the Redeemer, on the subject of the union of believers with himself, have their fulfilment in some happy hearts;—she embraced them thankfully, and waited for their full accomplishment. She loved the Saviour, and yielded to him a willing homage: to her, therefore, he manifested himself as he does not unto the world.

To behold the promise of the vernal blossom realized in the luxuriant fruits of summer, and the maturity of the autumnal harvest, is a sight on which the eye reposes with delight and gratitude. The Christian, who, in life's meridian, fulfils the bright anticipations of his early piety, and, as his sun declines, irradiates the horizon with his rich and golden splendours, is an object of still deeper admiration, and a subject of more lofty and sublime thanksgiving to the Fount of good. To God alike belongs the glory, whether in the realms of nature or of grace he manifests his wisdom, love, and might.

Christianity is a system not only of truth, but of power. To this, facts in numberless instances, from its first promulgation to the present hour, bear indubitable testimony; nor will it now be questioned, but that the honoured individual whose course has just been traced affords an additional demonstration of the efficiency with which it operates in the accomplishment of its important end. The conclusion, then, is manifest;—the Gospel is, in its origin and in its authority, Divine. With this principle, as its moral, the present work commenced: the progress of the volume has, it is presumed, sustained the premises; and the deduction to be fairly drawn, is the impressive lesson, that a system so adapted to the wants and miseries of fallen human nature, is a boon of uncomputed value, alike beneficent and energetic in its agency. What do its mercy and its power effect? What, in the present instance, did that love and power accomplish? In every case it purifies, exalts, and cheers defiled, degraded, miserable man. In this, its energy embraced its object in a season of peculiar interest and importance, and introduced a spring into the moral constitution which gave impulse to each faculty, and an expansion to the spirit that changed the character and form of life.

Neither for the world, nor for its literature, does Christian biography possess a charm. But to the holy and illuminated mind, there is no engagement more instructive or delightful, than to mark the period when the first spark of Divine light is struck into a human spirit; and to trace its progress as it proceeds to dissipate those clouds of error and of sin, which gather round the chaos of the fallen soul. The smile of superciliousness may mark the contempt of the worldling; but angels look down with intense interest on those who have entered the lists, and are strenuously pursuing the career of immortality. The exploits of heroes and potentates may engage the breathless attention of the lovers of this world's greatness; political schemes and national revolutions may engross their interests and speculations; but He, who sees in every regenerated spirit the travail of his own soul, regards with infinitely greater complacency the arduous and persevering efforts of one immortal being, to accomplish the supreme purpose for which life was given. The sympathies of the Divine Redeemer are with him who, through the intricacies, toils, and conflicts of this probationary state, urges his course with noble intrepidity; achieving victories in succession over subtle, dark, malignant enemies; bearing meekly various and accumulated trials; consecrating every energy of nature and of grace to the sublimest objects; renouncing both the world and self; and pressing onward to the attainment of an everlasting crown. If, then, the Mediator, and the ministries of his invisible and eternal kingdom, regard with highest interest the Christian in his course of discipline and duty; can those who have the same perilous path to tread, the same obstacles to surmount, the same enemies to overcome, and the same victories to achieve, be unconcerned to learn, from those who have preceded them, the lessons which experience teaches to thoughtful and reflecting minds?

The shades of evening will fall shortly upon those who now, for a season, pour their mingled tears into the urn of friendship; yet, beyond those shadows, faith anticipates the dawn of cloudless glory; and walks, in inseparable companionship, beside the stream of life, with those who have already tasted of the fruits of immortality. Till that momentous consummation, ye hallowed and triumphant spirits, who wear your crowns, and wave your palms of victory, "HAIL! AND FAREWELL!"

THE BEATIFIC VISION.

"The nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it," Rev. xxi, 24.

"Not the glitter and glory; not the diamond and topaz; no, it is God: he is all and in all."—RICHARD WATSON.

"WALK in that light!"—O! who are they
Whose feet shall tread that shining way?
Whose sight, undazzled, shall behold
That pavement of transparent gold?
By angels welcomed, who, O! who
Shall pass those pearly portals through,
And brighten in the glorious blaze
Of that gemm'd city's sparkling rays?

There walk the saved: but not in light
Of suns in seven-fold lustre bright;
Nor peerless moonbeams' silent sheen,
Reposing, soft, on velvet green:
No! nor where hallow'd radiance spreads,
From golden lamps, o'er sainted heads,
Within the temple ceaseless found,
While walk the hours their silent round.

There walk the saved: yes! they who bore,
While traversing life's stormy shore,
Through tears and blood, the hallow'd cross;
Who, purged from earth's terrestrial dross,
Received the Saviour's form impress'd,
Whose signet, on each hallow'd breast
Enstamp'd the mystic name, unknown
To all but those around the throne:

Who, calm 'midst earth's tumultuous strife,
Drew from himself that inward life
Which spirits breathe, from sense apart;
While, deep in each devoted heart,
The formless glory dwelt serene,
Of old, in cherub splendour seen,
Prelude of bliss reserved above,
In perfect light, for perfect love.

Now, all is heaven! no temple there
Unfolds its gates; no voice of prayer
From that bright multitude ascends;
But holy rapture, reverent, bends
Before the mediatorial throne;
Before the Lamb! whose beams alone
Irradiate that eternal sky;
The bursting blaze of Deity!

Soft is the voice of golden lutes;
Soft bloom heaven's fair ambrosial fruits;
Bright beams the dazzling lustre shed
From radiant gems in order spread,
From golden streets, from emerald floors,
From crystal floods, and pearly doors,
From rainbow tints, from angels' wings,
And all unutter'd glorious things.

Yet, not that city's dazzling glow,
Nor limpid waters' crystal flow,
Nor dulcet harmony, that springs
From golden lyres, nor angels' wings,
Though glistening with intensest dyes,
Reflected from immortal skies,
Completes the palmy bliss of those
On whom heaven's pearly portals close.

No! 'tis, with unfilm'd eyes, to see
The once incarnate Deity,
Who still, in lamb-like meekness, bears
Imprinted deep, those glorious scars,

Whence issued wide that crimson flow
In which their robes were wash'd below,
Which bought that crown, whose splendour bright
Now spheres them in a world of light!

No! 'tis not all that heaven can show
Of great, or fair, unglimpsed below;
Nor converse deep with spirits high,
Who saw those vollied lightnings fly
Which scathed their bright compeers in bliss
And hurl'd them down to hell's abyss;
Who mark'd creation rise sublime,
And hymn'd the early birth of time:

No! not with minds like these to blend,
And feel each angel-form a friend;
But God, their fount, to know and see;
From all-pervading Deity
To catch the nearer burst of light;
To gain the beatific sight;
Entranced in glory's peerless blaze,
Conform'd to him, on him to gaze.

THE END.

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